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SOCIAL SERVICE REVIEW (ISSN 0037-7961) is published quarterly (in March, June, September, and December) by the University of Chicago Press, 1427 East 60th Street, Chicago, IL 60637-2954. Periodicals postage paid at Chicago, Illinois, and additional mailing offices. Basic subscription rates for 2012 are $58 print + electronic, $54 print-only, and $52 e-only. Institutional print + electronic and e-only subscriptions are available through JSTOR's Current Scholarship Program and include unlimited online access; rates are tiered according to an institution's type and research output: $218–$436 (print + electronic), $185–$371 (e-only). Institutional print-only is $218. For additional rates, including single-copy rates and reduced rates for students, University of Chicago School of Social Service Administration alumni, and members of certain organizations, please visit http://www.journals.uchicago.edu/SSR. Additional taxes and/or postage for non-U.S. subscriptions may apply. Free or deeply discounted access is available in most developing nations through the Chicago Emerging Nations Initiative (http://www.journals.uchicago.edu/ceni/). Please direct subscription inquiries, back-issue requests, and address changes to The University of Chicago Press, Journals Division, P.O. Box 37005, Chicago, IL 60637. Telephone: 773-753-3347 or toll-free in the United States and Canada 877-705-1878; fax: 773-753-0811 or toll-free 877-705-1879; e-mail: subscriptions@press.uchicago.edu. Editorial correspondence should be addressed to the Editor, *Social Service Review*, School of Social Service Administration, University of Chicago, 969 East 60th Street, Chicago, IL 60637. E-mail: ssr@uchicago.edu. The *Social Service Review* home page on the World Wide Web is found at http://www.journals.uchicago.edu/SSR.

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Information for Authors

Founded in 1927, *Social Service Review* is devoted to the publication of thought-provoking, original research on social welfare policy, organization, and practice. Articles in the *Review* analyze issues from the points of view of various disciplines, theories, and methodological traditions, view critical problems in context, and carefully consider long-range solutions.

The *Review* features balanced, scholarly contributions from social work and social welfare scholars as well as from members of the various allied disciplines engaged in research on human behavior, social systems, history, public policy, and social services. The journal welcomes contributions on a wide range of topics, such as child welfare, poverty, homelessness, community intervention, race and ethnicity, clinical practice, and mental health. The *Review* also features discerning essays and substantive, critical book reviews.

Social Service Review is edited by Michael R. Sosin and the faculty of the School of Social Service Administration at the University of Chicago.

Preparing a Manuscript for Submission

Social Service Review does not publish and will not review works published previously or under consideration for publication elsewhere. The *Review* does not impose page limits but requires authors to present their work directly and concisely. Editorial efforts to conserve space are directly related to manuscript length and to the conciseness of the argument presented. The journal will review articles formatted in any style but requires accepted manuscripts to meet the journal's style. For a guide to the journal's policy, style, and editorial process, see http://www.journals.uchicago.edu/page/ssr/instruct.html.

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Send five printed copies of the manuscript to the Editor, *Social Service Review*, 969 East 60th Street, Chicago, IL 60637.

The Frank R. Breul Memorial Prize

I am pleased to announce that the 2012 Frank R. Breul Memorial Prize has been awarded to Rachel A. Gordon, Robert Kaestner, Sanders Korenman, and Kristin Abner. Established by the School of Social Service Administration at the University of Chicago, the prize pays tribute to Professor Breul's career as educator, administrator, and editor of *Social Service Review*. The prize is now awarded annually for what is judged to be the best article published in the *Review* in the preceding year. This year's prize honors "The Child and Adult Care Food Program: Who Is Served and Why?" The article appeared in the September 2011 issue.

Rachel A. Gordon is an associate professor of sociology and at the Institute of Government and Public Affairs at the University of Illinois at Chicago. Her current research examines domains of child-care quality; cost of child-care problems; intersection of gang participation, drug selling, and gun carrying; and stratification associated with physical beauty. She has an MPP and PhD in public policy from the University of Chicago.

Robert Kaestner is a professor in the Institute of Government and Public Affairs and a professor in the Department of Economics of the University of Illinois at Chicago. He is also a research associate of the National Bureau of Economic Research. Kaestner's areas of expertise are health, labor, and social policy. He has over 100 scholarly publications and has been awarded several research grants from the National Institutes of Health.

Sanders Korenman, an economist, is a professor in the School of Public Affairs at Baruch College, City University of New York, and is currently a research associate of the National Bureau of Economic Research. His recent research concerns difficulties of the measurement of child-care quality, as well as a study of the Child and Adult Care Food Program. He received his PhD from Harvard University and his AB from the University of California, Berkeley, both in economics.

Kristin Abner is a graduate student at the University of Illinois at Chicago. She received her MA from the University of Illinois at Chicago in 2009 and is currently working toward her PhD. Her research focuses

on the effects of social policy on children and families. Specifically, her dissertation focuses on contextual factors affecting child neglect.

Michael R. Sosin
Editor

Recent Recipients of the Frank R. Breul Memorial Prize

2011 Lenna Nepomnyaschy and Irwin Garfinkel, "Child Support Enforcement and Fathers' Contributions to Their Nonmarital Children," 84, no. 3 (September 2010)

2010 Michael J. Camasso and Radha Jagannathan, "How Family Caps Work: Evidence from a National Study," 83, no. 3 (September 2009)

2009 Stephanie Cosner Berzin, "Difficulties in the Transition to Adulthood: Using Propensity Scoring to Understand What Makes Foster Youth Vulnerable," 82, no. 2 (June 2008)

2008 Neeraj Kaushal, Qin Gao, and Jane Waldfogel, "Welfare Reform and Family Expenditures: How Are Single Mothers Adapting to the New Welfare and Work Regime?" 81, no. 3 (September 2007)

2007 Christina M. Gibson-Davis and E. Michael Foster, "A Cautionary Tale: Using Propensity Scores to Estimate the Effect of Food Stamps on Food Insecurity," 80, no. 1 (March 2006)

2006 Taryn Lindhorst and Julianna D. Padgett, "Disjunctures for Women and Frontline Workers: Implementation of the Family Violence Option," 79, no. 3 (September 2005)

Daniel R. Meyer, Maria Cancian, and Steven T. Cook, "Multiple-Partner Fertility: Incidence and Implications for Child Support Policy," 79, no. 4 (December 2005)

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2004 Claudia J. Coulton, "Metropolitan Inequities and the Ecology of Work: Implications for Welfare Reform," 77, no. 2 (June 2003)

Child Support and Young Children's Development

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University of Wisconsin–Madison

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This study examines the influence of nonresident fathers' formal and informal cash child support on children's cognitive skills and behavior at 5 years of age. Taking advantage of the panel structure of the Fragile Families and Child Wellbeing Study, the analyses control for child outcomes at age 3, as well as for a variety of child and family sociodemographic and psychosocial characteristics. Findings suggest that fathers' provision of informal cash support (but not formal support), particularly at or above the median amount, is positively associated with children's cognitive scores. Findings also suggest that provision of formal child support is adversely associated with internalizing and aggressive behaviors. Potential explanations and implications of these results for policy and future research are discussed.

Prior research finds that child support receipt is positively related to such measures of child well-being as cognitive skills, emotional development, and educational attainment. Most existing studies use samples of children born to married parents and focus specifically on child support received through formal child support agreements. Yet, approximately 40 percent of children are born to unmarried parents, and families headed by never-married mothers now represent the largest proportion of single-parent families in the United States (Hamilton, Martin, and Ventura 2009; Kreider and Elliott 2009). Compared with children of divorced parents, children born to unmarried parents are much less likely to receive child support from their noncustodial fa-

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thers.[1] In part, this reflects the fact that many of these men have low earnings and are only loosely connected to the labor market (Garfinkel, McLanahan, and Hanson 1998; Waller and Plotnick 2001; Grall 2007). It also partly reflects that many unmarried parents continue romantic relationships with each other and thus are less likely to become involved with the formal child support system than are divorced parents (Carlson, McLanahan, and England 2004). Research on unmarried parents confirms that most of these fathers are involved with their children and contribute to them informally, either through direct cash contributions or noncash support (Nepomnyaschy and Garfinkel 2007; Kane and Edin 2008). However, relatively little is known about the influence of cash child support, formal or informal, on the well-being and development of children in this population.

Background on Child Support

Research on the postindustrial family often characterizes the father's role as that of the breadwinner (Marsiglio et al. 2000). Although family roles have changed over time, such that both mothers and fathers now take on breadwinning and caregiving roles, fathers' contributions to family economic well-being cannot be overlooked (Carlson and Magnuson 2011). Indeed, differences in household-level economic resources provide one of the strongest explanations for why children in single-parent families fare worse than other children (McLanahan and Sandefur 1994).

A large body of research documents that economic hardship and poverty are likely detrimental to children's development. Economic resources may affect families in several important ways. First, resources may enable parents to purchase important goods and services that contribute to their children's healthy development. These may include quality child care, housing, and schools, as well as enriching activities and lessons (Duncan and Brooks-Gunn 1997). Economic support might also reduce custodial parents' economic hardship and improve their mental health; reductions in psychological distress may improve the quality of parenting, thus increasing nurturance and reducing harsh discipline (McLoyd 1998). Finally, financial support is often closely related to other types of father involvement and may function to increase or improve fathers' nonpecuniary involvement with their children (Seltzer, Schaeffer, and Charng 1989; Greene and Moore 2000; Peters et al. 2004; Nepomnyaschy 2007; Garasky et al. 2010; Huang 2009). For these reasons, scholars consistently point to economic support from nonresident fa-

1. Noncustodial parents may be fathers or mothers; however, in approximately 84 percent of cases, children live with their mothers and have a noncustodial father (Kreider and Elliott 2009).

thers as an important influence on children's development. At least during middle childhood, however, evidence is stronger for the causal link between family income and children's cognitive and achievement outcomes than between family income and behavioral outcomes (Duncan and Brooks-Gunn 1997; Magnuson and Votruba-Drzal 2009).

Economic support from noncustodial parents is typically categorized into formal cash support, informal cash support, and in-kind support. Formal support is provided through a formal child support agreement. Informal cash support is typically defined as any financial contribution provided by fathers outside of the formal agreement, and in-kind support is defined as any noncash good or service that fathers provide directly.

Formal orders are established and modified by administrative hearing or family court, and state guidelines for child support obligations are based on either the noncustodial or both parents' income (American Bar Association 2010). With few exceptions, child support orders require payment through wage withholding, which is now the most common form of collection (US Department of Health and Human Services 2011). Once orders are established, fathers who are regularly employed have little discretion over their payments (Bartfeld and Meyer 2003). If a custodial parent receives federal means-tested public assistance (including cash benefits, food stamps, and child care subsidies), federal regulations require the parent to relinquish to the state any child support collected on that parent's behalf (US Public Law 104-193, sec. 302 [1996]).

The percentage of low-income nonresident parents paying child support for their families is quite low (Berger and Langton 2011). Estimates from the Fragile Families and Child Wellbeing Study (FFCWS) suggest that among children born to unmarried parents, only 20 percent of nonresident fathers make formal child support payments by the time the focal child is 3 years old, but nearly 40 percent provide informal support (Nepomnyaschy and Garfinkel 2007). There are several explanations for the low levels of support paid by noncustodial unmarried fathers. Rates of joblessness are high in this population, and economic resources are scarce for many of these fathers (Cancian and Meyer 2004). Paying even a little child support is difficult for fathers with low-wage jobs or irregular employment, as many struggle to meet their own basic needs (Mincy and Sorensen 1998; Magnuson and Gibson-Davis 2007). Another possible explanation is the high prevalence of multiple-partner fertility in low-income populations and particularly among unmarried parents (Carlson and Furstenberg 2006). In the context of low wages and limited economic resources, fathers may find it particularly difficult to meet their obligations to children and families in more than one household (Meyer, Cancian, and Cook 2005; Magnuson and Gibson-Davis 2007; Sinkewicz and Garfinkel 2009). In addition, low-income

fathers and mothers may prefer informal support to formal support, because most states keep the majority of formal child support paid for children of public assistance recipients (Roberts and Vinson 2004). Finally, fathers may prefer informal payments over formal support, because an informal arrangement may strengthen their hand in bargaining with their child's mother over issues related to visitation and child rearing. Delivering informal support may also enable fathers to monitor how their money is spent (Edin et al. 2000; Waller and Plotnick 2001; England and Folbre 2002; Pate 2002).

Links between Child Support and Child Well-Being

Paul Amato and Joan Gilbreth's (1999) meta-analysis synthesizes research on the associations of nonresident father involvement with child well-being outcomes. Their investigation identifies 14 studies that examine child support's relationships with children's achievement and behavioral outcomes. The average (weighted) estimated effect of child support receipt on children's academic success is .09; for externalizing behavior, the estimated effect is −.08. The review indicates that child support has no statistically significant link to children's internalizing behaviors. However, several of the reviewed studies suggest that, at least for some racial or demographic groups, an additional dollar of child support has statistically significantly larger effects on child outcomes than do other sources of family income (Knox and Bane 1994; Argys et al. 1998). Amato and Gilbreth's (1999) analysis of potential moderators also indicates that effects do not differ by child gender.

An important finding from prior studies of the effects of family income on child well-being is that, regardless of family composition, family income during early childhood appears to be more important in affecting children's cognitive development than does family income during middle childhood (Magnuson and Votruba-Drzal 2009). Family income during adolescence is also strongly linked to subsequent educational attainment and may be important in defraying the costs of higher education. Does this pattern of age-related effects also hold for child support payments? The evidence is unclear. Amato and Gilbreth (1999) do not consider age as a moderator. Most studies included in that meta-analysis were conducted with samples of children in middle childhood or adolescence, but the analyzed period of child support receipt is not clearly specified in some cases and may fall within the early childhood years.

Furthermore, the meta-analysis does not consider the parents' marital status at the time of the child's birth. Given that most study samples from that time period were composed primarily of divorced parents, it is unclear whether associations generalize to unmarried parents. Two recent studies shed light on the association of child support with well-

being outcomes of young children of unmarried parents. First, Angela Greene and Kristin Moore (2000) use data from the National Evaluation of Welfare-to-Work Strategies to examine the associations of formal and informal support with young children's outcomes. This study is notable not only for the young age of the children (ages 3–5) but also because the study sample was recruited from welfare recipients and applicants; as such, the sample is largely composed of low-income (and predominantly unmarried) African American mothers. Greene and Moore (2000) find that only 16 percent of mothers received any formal support in the year before the survey. Receipt of informal support (including both cash and in-kind support) is found to be more common; about 42 percent of mothers are found to receive such support in the year prior to survey. Results from models controlling for father visitation indicate that formal and informal child support are positively associated with good behavioral outcomes, and informal child support is positively associated with quality home environments. Neither formal nor informal support is found to predict children's school readiness but, given that welfare rules allow only $50 of child support to pass through each month to mothers receiving welfare or food stamps, it is not surprising that the study detects no strong associations with formal support. A considerable limitation of the Greene and Moore (2000) study, however, is its use of cross-sectional data, which makes it difficult to rule out the possibility that unobserved differences across individuals drive their results. Though these models control for various parent and child characteristics, there may still be unmeasured differences between fathers who pay and those who do not pay support, and these differences may also affect child outcomes.

In the second study, Laura Argys and colleagues (1998) use data from the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth to estimate effects of child support on test scores of 5–8-year-old children. They look separately at children born to married and unmarried parents and at black and white children. Among children born to married parents, they find that child support is positively associated with school achievement for black but not white children. Conversely, among children born to unmarried parents, they find that child support is positively associated with achievement for white but not black children. These results remain robust in models that employ an instrumental variables (IV) approach to address unobserved heterogeneity, but the estimate for white children in the nonmarital birth sample is not quite statistically significant. Argys and colleagues describe these differences as puzzling and suggest that additional work is needed to understand the patterns.

Most empirical studies investigate unidirectional effects in which child support influences children's development and behavior. In observational studies, researchers must rule out other explanations for observed associations, for example, by modeling all possible confounding factors.

As a result, studies often try to adjust for fathers' demographic characteristics and other facets of family life in estimating child support receipt's associations with child outcomes. Studies differ, however, in the rigor of the efforts to reduce omitted variable bias and often face the unenviable position of controlling too many factors or too few. In theory, measures of child and family characteristics should be included as controls only if they are not caused themselves in part by child support payments. Yet, the possibility for omitted variables looms large, particularly if child effects are prevalent, as some research on adolescents suggests (Coley and Medeiros 2007; Hawkins, Amato, and King 2007), or if economic support is strongly related to other, nonpecuniary aspects of father involvement. For example, Greene and Moore (2000) control for the frequency of fathers' visitation. However, if payment of child support has a causal effect on the frequency with which fathers visit their children, then controlling for frequency of visits might not be appropriate. However, if fathers' visitation is confounded with child support payments but not caused by them, then visitation should be controlled in order to isolate the effect of fathers' financial support (or to reduce the likelihood of overstating the importance of child support) in determining children's healthy development.

Several studies use IV models, a two-stage estimation process, to address concerns about unobserved heterogeneity and reverse causality. In the first stage, these models employ an exogenous variable (or variables) as an instrument to predict the endogenous independent variable of interest and then substitute this predicted value in the regression equation of the dependent variable in the second stage. A valid instrument must be associated with the independent variable but may not be associated with the dependent variable except through its effect on the independent variable. For example, Argys and colleagues (1998) employ state measures of child support enforcement and welfare generosity as well as demographic and employment characteristics in the children's county of residence as instruments to predict the amount of child support received by a mother. The IV findings from that study are much larger than the ordinary least squares (OLS) estimates but are not as precisely estimated, making these results difficult to interpret. One important limitation of IV methods in the study by Argys and colleagues (1998) and in similar studies is the necessary assumption that the instruments are not directly associated with the outcomes. That assumption may not be met. Another limitation of the IV methods in prior studies is that state- and county-level indicators may be useful for instrumenting formal child support receipt, but researchers have yet to identify an appropriate instrument through which to predict informal receipt.

The current study builds on prior research in several important ways.

First, it uses data based on a large sample of children born to unmarried parents. The data provide detailed information on family characteristics, relationship history, and child support receipt. Second, it focuses on young children between ages 3 and 5. Research suggests that children are most vulnerable to their surrounding contexts in early childhood and thus might be particularly sensitive to economic investments at that time (Shonkoff and Phillips 2000). Furthermore, by studying child support provided during this 2-year period and by taking advantage of the longitudinal nature of the data, the study can control for children's prior achievement and behavior. Third, this research focuses on a larger set of outcomes than those examined in prior studies of young children, and it considers both children's achievement and their behavior. Fourth, the study focuses attention on alternate measures and functional forms of child support receipt. Specifically, it considers both linear and nonlinear specifications of child support. Additionally, because much prior research points to the importance of informal and in-kind support contributions for low-income families (Edin and Lein 1997; Waller and Plotnick 2001; Nepomnyaschy and Garfinkel 2007; Kane and Edin 2008; Garasky et al. 2010), the study analyzes the different types of support that fathers provide. Finally, the study considers the robustness of these findings across subgroups defined by gender, race or ethnicity, maternal education, and nativity.

Prior research leads to the hypothesis that the level of support will be positively associated with children's cognitive development, such that increases in support will be tied to improvements in development. Hypotheses of the association of child support with children's behaviors are more difficult to make, given the inconsistent findings from prior research. Differences in the associations of child support with child outcomes by gender are not expected; however, these relationships are analyzed to confirm findings from prior studies. The analyses also consider whether the effects of child support differ with the level of mothers' education, which serves as a proxy for household economic resources. The magnitude of associations are expected to be larger among children whose mothers have lower levels of education because child support is a source of additional income that may have larger benefits for families at the lower end of the income distribution. However, maternal education may also indicate a mother's ability to manage resources, and this ability can affect children's well-being. In this case, child support would be expected to have larger effects among children of higher educated mothers. To address inconsistent findings from prior studies, the study examines associations across racial and ethnic groups, though no hypotheses are offered. Finally, extending prior work, the study examines associations by mothers' nativity status. The expectation is that children of immigrants will derive greater benefit from child support

receipt than will children of native-born mothers, because the former may have access to fewer alternative sources of income (public benefits or from the labor market).

Method

Data

The sample for this study is drawn from the FFCWS, a longitudinal birth-cohort study of 4,898 children born between 1998 and 2000 in 20 large US cities (see Reichman et al. [2001] for a description of the study and its design). The FFCWS oversampled children born to unmarried parents relative to those born to married parents by a 3 : 1 ratio. Therefore, study children are more likely than counterparts in the general population to reside in a household that does not include their birth father and are more socioeconomically disadvantaged than those in a nationally representative sample. However, the sample of children born to unmarried parents is representative of all such children born during that period in US cities with populations greater than 200,000.

When possible, FFCWS interviewed both biological parents in the hospital shortly after the focal child's birth; fathers not present in the hospital completed an interview elsewhere as soon as possible following the birth. The FFCWS conducted follow-up interviews by telephone with both birth parents when the focal child was approximately 1, 3, and 5 years old. At each interview, researchers collected extensive data on the parent, child, and household. Following the age 3 and age 5 telephone interviews, the FFCWS asked families to participate in in-home assessments of parental behaviors, child health, child development, and child and family well-being. The outcome variables, which measure child cognitive skills and behavior problems, are drawn from the age 5 in-home assessment.

The study uses multiple imputation techniques to impute values for all variables with missing data. Based on prior research, the relatively large sample size in this study, and the proportion of cases with missing data (less than 40 percent), 10 data sets of the full FFCWS sample are imputed using Stata statistical software's Imputation by Chained Equations program (Rubin 1987, 114; Johnson and Young 2011). After data imputation, the analysis sample was limited to children born to unmarried parents. This group has received scant attention in prior research on the relationship between child support receipt and child well-being. Of the 4,898 children in the full FFCWS sample, 1,187 (24 percent) are excluded because their parents were married at the time of their birth.

The sample is further limited to children who lived with their mother (at least part-time) at the time of the age 5 interview, those whose

biological father was alive at the time of the age 5 interview, and those whose biological mother and father were neither married nor cohabiting at both the age 3 and age 5 interviews. Across the 10 imputed data sets, 3 percent of children (ranging from 106 to 126 children across data sets) are excluded because they did not live with their biological mother at the time of the age 5 interview. An additional 2 percent of children (ranging from 82 to 94 children across data sets) are excluded because their biological father was not alive at the time of the age 5 interview. Finally, 46 percent of children (1,596–1,626) are excluded because their biological parents were married or cohabiting at the time of at least one (age 3 or age 5) interview. The resulting analysis sample provides 16,902 observations across the 10 data sets. The number of children included in each data set ranges from 1,674 to 1,792.

Measures

Child development outcomes.—Three child development outcomes from the 5-year in-home assessment are employed as dependent variables: cognitive skills, internalizing behaviors, and aggressive behaviors. In all analyses, the measures are age-standardized to have a mean of zero and a standard deviation of one.

The *Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test–Third Edition* (PPVT) is used to measure children's cognitive skills. The PPVT assesses children's receptive vocabulary, verbal skills, and scholastic aptitude (Dunn and Dunn 1997). The *Test de Vocabulario en Imagenes Peabody* (TVIP), a Spanish-language version of the PPVT, is used for children whose primary language is Spanish, and scores from that test are employed in this analysis (Dunn et al. 1986). All models include a variable indicating whether TVIP scores are used in lieu of PPVT scores. The analyses treat these scores as continuous measures; higher scores indicate better cognitive skills.

Two subscales from the Child Behavior Checklist are used to measure children's behavior problems: internalizing (withdrawn, anxious, and depressed) behaviors and aggressive behaviors (Achenbach 1992). The checklist is one of the only well-standardized instruments that assess problematic behavior in young children. The internalizing-behavior problem subscale included in the FFCWS at the age 5 interview consists of 9 items that measure withdrawn behaviors and 14 items that measure anxious or depressed behaviors; the aggressive-behavior problems subscale includes 20 items. Each item asks the child's primary caregiver (the mother in this sample) to report on the extent to which various statements about children's behaviors apply to the child. Possible responses to each question include "not true" (coded 0), "somewhat or sometimes true" (coded 1), and "often or very often true" (coded 2). Responses are summed for all items across each subscale, converted to

z-scores, and treated as continuous measures; higher scores indicate more behavior problems.

As noted above, all child outcomes are measured at the 5-year survey in these analyses. The same child outcomes are also measured at the 3-year survey, and those 3-year measures (lagged outcome measures) are used as controls in some specifications.

Child support measures.—This study considers a comprehensive set of variables to measure child support, which are all taken from mothers' reports. The primary measure is the total amount of financial (cash) support that a father contributes to his children. It is calculated as the sum of formal and informal support that a mother reports receiving from the focal child's father over the 2 years prior to the age 5 interview. For the measure of formal support, mothers are asked whether they have a formal child support agreement and how much support the father paid in the 2 years prior to the interview (or since the agreement was established, if the agreement was set less than 2 years prior). The informal support measure captures mothers' reports on the amount of cash the father provided outside of any formal agreement in the 2 years prior to the interview. Both the formal and informal support measures ask mothers to provide a total dollar amount and then offer categories if the mother is unable or unwilling to provide a dollar amount. Mothers who offer a categorical answer are assigned the midpoint of the chosen category.

This information is included in analyses as linear (in $1,000s) or alternately categorical measures of child support for three types of cash support: total, formal, and informal. For each type of support, three categories are constructed: those who report receiving $0, those who report receiving more than $0 but less than the median reported by those with any support in that category (medians are $1,500 for total cash support, $1,800 for formal support, and $700 for informal support), and those who report receiving the median amount or more.

Sociodemographic characteristics.—The analyses use an extensive set of controls that capture characteristics of mothers, fathers, and children as reported by mothers. Specifically, the study controls for mothers' race or ethnicity (non-Hispanic white, non-Hispanic black, Hispanic, other race or ethnicity) and education (less than high school diploma, high school or general equivalency diploma, more than high school), both parents' ages at the birth of the child, whether either parent was employed during the year prior to the child's birth, whether the parents cohabited at the time of the birth, whether the parents had other children together at the focal child's birth, and whether either parent has a child with another partner (measured at the 1-year survey). Other indicators include whether the mother was born in the United States, her household size at baseline (number of children and adults in the household), whether the household included a grandparent at baseline,

whether the mother received Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) benefits or food stamps in the year before the child's birth, and the total annual income of her household in the year prior to the child's birth (entered as the natural log). Child measures include sex, age (in months) at the 5-year in-home interview, and whether the child was born low birth weight (less than 2,500 grams). All of these variables are taken from mothers' reports.

Psychosocial characteristics.—The analyses include a detailed set of variables, all taken from mothers' reports, that capture both parents' psychosocial characteristics. Mothers' characteristics from the baseline survey include the mother's report about whether she used cigarettes, drugs, or alcohol during the pregnancy (coded yes if she reported any use), whether she lived with both of her biological parents at age 15, the number of months that she and the focal child's father knew each other prior to the pregnancy, whether either parent considered an abortion of the focal pregnancy, the extent to which the mother holds traditional gender-role attitudes, and her report of the quality of her relationship with the father. Attitudes concerning traditional gender roles are measured as the mean of the mother's responses (range from strongly disagree = 1 to strongly agree = 4) concerning whether important decisions in the family should be made by a man and whether it is better if the man earns the living and the woman cares for family. The mean score across these two items is then standardized (mean = 0, standard deviation = 1); higher values indicate more traditional gender-role attitudes. Parents' relationship quality is measured as the mean of the mother's responses on a three-point scale (often = 1, sometimes = 2, or never = 3). Mothers indicate how often the father (1) is willing to compromise; (2) hits them when angry; (3) expresses affection or love; (4) criticizes them; and (5) encourages them. Scores are standardized (mean = 0, standard deviation = 1); positive items are reversed, so that higher values indicate better relationship quality.

From the 1-year survey, the mother's report of depressive symptoms is included, based on the six-symptom version of the Comprehensive International Diagnostic Interview for Depression (Kessler et al. 1998). Mothers were asked whether in the past 2 weeks they (1) felt more tired and low on energy than usual, (2) gained or lost more than 10 pounds of weight, (3) had more trouble falling asleep than usual, (4) had more trouble concentrating than usual, (5) felt no good or down on themselves, and (6) thought a lot about death. Positive responses are summed across the six items and scores are standardized (mean = 0, standard deviation = 1); higher values indicate more symptoms. Also from the 1-year survey, the mother's report of the child's temperament is included. Child temperament is measured as the mean of the mother's response to six statements about the child: tends to be shy, often fusses and cries, is very sociable, gets upset easily, reacts strongly when upset,

and is very friendly with strangers. Possible responses range on a five-point scale (least like my child = 1, most like my child = 5). The mean score across these items is standardized (mean = 0, standard deviation = 1). Positive items are reversed, so that higher scores indicate more temperamental behavior.

The mother's verbal ability, based on her PPVT score, and her score on an impulsivity scale are included. Both mother's verbal ability and impulsivity are measured at the 3-year survey. The impulsivity scale is based on the mean of the mother's response to six items (possible answers range from strongly disagree = 1 to strongly agree = 4). The items are (1) "I often say what comes to my head without thinking," (2) "Often, I don't think enough before I act," (3) "I often say or do things without thinking of consequences," (4) "I often get in trouble because I don't think before I act," (5) "Plans don't work out because I don't go over them carefully," and (6) "I make up my mind before considering the situation from all angles." The mean score across these items is standardized (mean = 0, standard deviation = 1); higher scores indicate more impulsivity. Though these measures are only available at the 3-year survey, they can both be considered stable underlying characteristics that do not change over time.

Mothers' reports from the baseline survey about the father's psychosocial characteristics include whether he has a problem keeping a job or friends because of drugs or alcohol and whether he has a physical or health condition that limits his ability to work. Mothers' report of whether the father has spent any time in jail or prison is included from the 1-year survey. Finally, the mother's report about fathers' involvement with children at the 5-year survey is included in supplemental models. Involvement is based on the mother's report of the number of days on which the father saw the focal child in the month prior to the 5-year interview. Involvement is included in models as a continuous variable (number of days) or alternately as a categorical variable indicating whether he did not see the child in that period (i.e., 0 days), saw the child more than zero but fewer than 8 days (8 days is the median for those with any contact), or saw the child 8 days or more.

Analytic Strategy

The primary research question in this study is whether child support receipt is associated with children's cognitive and behavioral development. Overcoming self-selection is a key challenge in answering this question. Mothers who receive (and fathers who pay) child support differ in many ways from those who do not; thus, it is difficult to isolate the unique effects of child support. The primary strategy for doing so here is to measure as many differences as possible between families that receive child support and those that do not. Five OLS regressions are

estimated, each with more controls than the preceding one, for each of the three child outcomes discussed previously. Stata's MIM command is used to analyze the imputed data sets. The results are qualitatively similar to those obtained when excluding imputed data. As one might expect, the exclusion of imputed data reduces the sample, the statistical significance of estimates, and the statistical power of the models.

The first model includes only the total amount of child support reportedly received and the age of the child in months at the age 5 assessment. The second model adds the (lagged) child outcomes (cognitive skills, internalizing behavior, and aggressive behavior) from the age 3 in-home interview. This is a particularly powerful control because it measures children's prior level of each outcome measure. The control can serve as a proxy for a potentially unobserved set of family experiences from birth to age 3. If these early experiences do not exert direct (independent) effects on later outcomes, then the inclusion of the lagged dependent variable reduces the possibility that differences in children's early experiences bias estimates of the effects of child support. The third model includes a detailed set of sociodemographic characteristics. The fourth includes a range of psychosocial factors. The final model, which is supplemental, includes a control for the number of days on which the father saw his child in the 30 days prior to the age 5 interview.

Identifying variables for inclusion as controls is complicated by the fact that it is undesirable to control for characteristics that are endogenous to child support receipt (or payment) between ages 3 and 5. As a result, the analyses focus on characteristics measured prior to age 3. These characteristics may be confounded with later child support payments and child outcomes but are not jointly determined by child support. For example, because a mother's labor-market participation might be influenced by her receipt of child support, the analyses only include a measure of household income and mothers' employment prior to the birth of the child. However, the study does control for measures that might affect a fathers' ability to pay child support and also independently affect children's outcomes. Such measures include whether the father has spent time in prison or has a physical condition that limits his ability to work. If these characteristics primarily affect children via their associations with the father's child support payment, then including them as controls should have no effect on the estimates concerning child support. However, if the characteristics affect children independent of their associations with fathers' child support payments, as might be expected, then the inclusion of these variables will reduce bias in the estimates of child support's associations with the measured child outcomes. Previous research finds that fathers' contact and involvement with children is endogenous with child support payments, particularly with informal support (Nepomnyaschy 2007). Thus, those items should

not be included in these equations. However, because this study focuses on the role that child support plays in child development (as opposed to the roles played by fathers' overall involvement or commitment to children), the final model (model 5) controls for fathers' contact with children, as a robustness test.

Regressions are estimated separately for each of the three outcomes, and separate models are estimated for two specifications of child support. One model uses a linear measure; the other uses two dummy variables (reported receipt of support above and below the median level; the reference category is reported receipt of no child support). In the first set of analyses, five nested models are presented with more control variables added in each model. For the second set of analyses, all control variables are included in the regressions. Finally, regressions are estimated for several subgroups of interest that are defined by child gender, maternal education (a proxy for mothers' economic resources and ability to manage resources), race or ethnicity, and nativity.

Results

Sample Description

Table 1 presents descriptive characteristics for the full sample, and two additional columns stratify results by whether mothers report receiving any cash child support from fathers in the 2 years prior to the age 5 interview. Half of all mothers report receiving cash support from fathers, and the mean amount of total cash support is $1,595. Nearly a third of mothers (29 percent) report receiving formal support, and about the same proportion (30 percent) reports informal support. On average, however, mothers report receiving nearly 3 times as much formal support ($1,156) as informal support ($440). Among mothers reporting receipt of any support, the reported median amount of formal support is $1,800 and that of informal support is $700 (not shown). Despite these relatively low rates of receipt, child support is an important resource for those who receive it. On average, mothers who report receiving any cash support indicate that they receive almost $3,200 in total cash support over the 2 prior years.

As results in table 1 suggest, the cognitive skills of children at age 5 who receive no cash support (whether formal or informal) are lower than the skills of counterparts who receive any cash support. No differences are observed in behavior problems (internalizing and aggressive behavior) by whether the mother reports child support receipt.

Families that reportedly receive support are estimated to differ in terms of children's developmental outcomes and also in terms of potentially important characteristics that might affect these outcomes (table 1). The estimates suggest that, compared with mothers who report

receiving any cash support, those who report receiving no cash support are less likely to cohabit with the father at the child's birth, are younger, have lower levels of education, and have more people in their households. Mothers reporting no support in the year prior to the child's birth are less likely to work and more likely to receive TANF or food stamps. Compared with fathers who provide any cash support, those who reportedly do not provide cash support are estimated to be younger, less likely to work in the year prior to the child's birth, and more likely to have a child with another partner.

Mothers who report receiving no cash support are also more likely to report that they considered an abortion of the focal pregnancy or used cigarettes, drugs, or alcohol during their pregnancy. Compared with counterparts who report any support, mothers who report receiving no support are estimated to have known the father for a shorter period of time prior to the pregnancy (5 fewer months), have higher scores on the depression and impulsivity measures, and exhibit lower scores on the scale of relationship quality. Mothers who report receiving no cash support are much more likely (12 percent vs. 6 percent) to report that the father has a problem keeping a job because of drugs or alcohol and that he has spent time in jail or prison (51 percent vs. 36 percent) than are mothers who report receiving such support. Finally, mothers who report receiving no cash support report that fathers have seen their children on fewer days in the month prior to the survey (3 days vs. 9 days) and are much more likely not to have seen them at all (64 percent vs. 26 percent) than mothers who report receiving support.

Given the many differences between mothers who report receiving support (and fathers who reportedly pay it) and those who do not, it is unclear whether differences in children's outcomes can be attributed to the receipt of child support or are instead associated with these other family characteristics. Multivariate regressions are modeled to address these issues.

Regression Results

Total support.—Table 2 summarizes results from models that regress children's age 5 cognitive skills and behavior problems (internalizing and aggressive behaviors) on the total amount of child support their mothers report receiving in the 2 years prior to the age 5 survey. The only predictors in model 1 are the amount of total child support and child age. Model 2 adds a lagged measure of the outcome variable (from the 3-year survey). Model 3 includes predictors from the first two models and adds family sociodemographic characteristics. Model 4 adds psychosocial characteristics to the preceding list of controls. Model 5 adds fathers' contact with children. The top panel for each outcome (panels 1A, 2A, and 3A) presents results for the linear specification of total cash

Table 1

VARIABLE DESCRIPTION FOR FULL SAMPLE AND BY RECEIPT OF ANY CASH SUPPORT

	All Families		No Cash Support		Any Cash Support	
	M or P	SD	M or P	SD	M or P	SD
Child support received in past 2 years at child's age 5:						
Any cash support	.50				1.00	
Any formal support	.29				.58	
Any informal support	.30				.60	
Total cash support ($)	1,595	3,331			3,194	4,138
No cash support	.50				0	
Total cash < $1,500	.23				.46	
Total cash ≥ $1,500	.27				.54	
Total formal support ($)	1,156	3,089			2,314	4,052
No formal support	.71				.42	
Formal support < $1,800	.14				.29	
Formal support ≥ $1,800	.14				.29	
Total informal support ($)	440	1,310			880	1,746
No informal support	.70				.39	
Informal support < $700	.15				.30	
Informal support ≥ $700	.15				.31	
Outcomes at age 5:						
Cognitive skills (PPVT *z*-score)*	.00	1.00	−.07	1.02	.07	.97
Internalizing behaviors (*z*-score)	.00	1.00	.01	.99	−.01	1.00

Aggressive behaviors (z-score)	.00	1.00	.01	1.04	−.01	.99
Lagged outcomes at age 3:						
Cognitive skills (PPVT z-score)	.00	1.00	−.01	.98	.01	1.02
Internalizing behaviors (z-score)	.00	1.00	.05	1.02	−.05	.97
Aggressive behaviors (z-score)	.00	1.00	.05	1.04	−.05	.96
Sociodemographics:						
Parents cohabiting at birth**	.31		.28		.35	
Focal child is female**	.47		.44		.51	
Age of child at age 5 assessment (mos.)	64.60	3.10	64.60	3.10	64.60	3.00
Focal child low birth weight	.12		.12		.11	
Mother's age at child's birth*	23.60	5.60	23.30	5.40	24.00	5.70
Mother is white	.13		.13		.12	
Mother is black*	.65		.62		.68	
Mother is Hispanic+	.20		.22		.18	
Mother is of other race or ethnicity	.02		.03		.02	
Mother born in United States*	.93		.91		.94	
Mother has less than high school education**	.39		.44		.35	
Mother has high school education	.34		.35		.35	
Mother has more than high school education***	.26		.21		.30	
Mother's HH size at birth**	3.60	1.70	3.70	1.80	3.40	1.60
Grandparent in HH at birth	.38		.40		.36	
LN HH income at birth	9.64	1.40	9.61	1.30	9.67	1.50
Mother worked in year prior to birth**	.78		.74		.82	
Mother received TFS in year prior to birth+	.48		.50		.45	
Father's age at birth*	26.30	7.10	25.80	6.80	26.80	7.40
Father worked in year prior to birth**	.73		.68		.77	
Mother and father have other joint children at child's age 1	.26		.26		.26	
Mother has child with other partner at child's age 1	.44		.46		.42	
Father has child with other partner at child's age 1*	.51		.54		.48	
Psychosocial factors:						
Mother used substances while pregnant**	.31		.35		.27	
Mos. parents knew each other before pregnancy*	44.50	48.30	41.90	47.30	47.10	49.10
Mother or father considered abortion*	.45		.48		.42	
Mother lived with both parents at age 15	.31		.31		.31	
Maternal depression at child's age 1 (z-score)+	.00	1.00	.05	1.04	−.05	.96
Mother's PPVT at child's age 3 (z-score)	.00	1.00	−.02	1.02	.02	.98

Table 1 (*Continued*)

	All Families		No Cash Support		Any Cash Support	
	M or P	SD	M or P	SD	M or P	SD
Mother's impulsivity at child's age 3 (*z*-score)*	.00	1.00	.06	1.02	−.06	.98
Mother's traditional gender role attitudes at birth (*z*-score)	.00	1.00	.03	1.04	−.03	.96
Mother-father relationship quality at birth (*z*-score)***	.00	1.00	−.10	1.05	.10	.93
Focal child difficult temperament at age 1 (*z*-score)	.00	1.00	.04	1.01	−.04	.99
Father has problem with drugs or alcohol at birth***	.09		.12		.06	
Father has work-limiting condition at birth	.06		.07		.06	
Father ever spent time in jail or prison at child's age 1***	.44		.51		.36	
No. of days father saw child[a]***	5.91	9.20	2.59	6.50	8.76	10.10
Father did not see child***	.45		.64		.26	
Father saw child < 8 days*	.28		.23		.32	
Father saw child ≥ 8 days***	.28		.12		.42	
Total obs. across 10 imputed data sets	16,902		8,410		8,492	
Range of obs. across 10 imputed data sets	1,674–1,792		818–928		840–864	

Note.—M or P = mean or proportion; PPVT = Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test; HH = household; LN = natural log; mos. = months; TFS = benefits from Temporary Assistance for Needy Families or the Food Stamp Program; obs. = observations. Numbers in table are means or proportions and standard deviations.

[a] In the 30 days prior to the 5-year interview.

+ $p < .10$.

* $p < .05$.

** $p < .01$.

*** $p < .001$.

Table 2

ASSOCIATIONS OF TOTAL CASH CHILD SUPPORT RECEIPT WITH COGNITIVE SKILLS AND BEHAVIOR PROBLEMS

	Model				
	1	2	3	4	5
Panel 1: cognitive skills:					
Panel 1A: total cash support	.038***	.027**	.016	.016	.013
	(3.94)	(2.85)	(1.61)	(1.58)	(1.23)
Panel 1B: levels of cash support:					
Below median cash support	.003	.042	.023	.039	−.001
	(.04)	(.59)	(.33)	(.59)	(.02)
At or above median support	.266**	.212**	.144*	.142*	.093
	(3.48)	(3.19)	(2.06)	(2.03)	(1.35)
Panel 2: internalizing behavior problems:					
Panel 2A: total cash support	−.013	−.006	−.005	0	0
	(1.36)	(.71)	(.55)	(.03)	(.04)
Panel 2B: levels of cash support:					
Below median cash support	−.027	−.015	.023	.032	.038
	(.38)	(.24)	(.37)	(.49)	(.57)
At or above median support	−.019	.041	.069	.103	.110+
	(.28)	(.67)	(1.13)	(1.61)	(1.66)
Panel 3: aggressive behavior problems:					
Panel 3A: total cash support	−.017+	−.01	−.004	0	−.002
	(1.85)	(1.22)	(.51)	(.02)	(.23)
Panel 3B: levels of cash support:					
Below median cash support	.035	.071	.099	.115+	.093
	(.50)	(1.17)	(1.62)	(1.89)	(1.52)
At or above median support	−.069	−.006	.05	.092	.066
	(1.01)	(.10)	(.78)	(1.45)	(.95)
Model includes:					
Lagged dependent variable		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Sociodemographics			Yes	Yes	Yes
Psychosocial factors				Yes	Yes
Father contact (days in past month)					Yes

NOTE.—16,902 observations across 10 imputed data sets (1,674–1,792 observations per data set). Coefficients (and *t*-statistics) come from ordinary least squares regressions. Covariates are listed in table 1. All models control for child age at 5-year assessment. All cognitive skills models (PPVT scores) control for whether the child took the *Test de Vocabulario en Imagenes Peabody* (TVIP, the Spanish version of the PPVT). The reference group in panel B is composed of those who report receiving no cash support.

+ $p < .10$.
* $p < .05$.
** $p < .01$.
*** $p < .001$.

support, and the results are scaled in $1,000 increments. The bottom panels (1B, 2B, 3B) present the categorical specification of total support. This specification compares the estimates for those with support below the median and those for mothers reporting support at or above the median with those for mothers who reportedly receive no support.

Results from the bivariate model for cognitive skills (panel 1A, model 1) suggest an increase of .038 of a standard deviation in cognitive skills

for every $1,000 of total cash support received. The addition of the child's PPVT score from the prior wave is estimated to reduce the coefficient to .027 (model 2), but it remains statistically significant. Adding sociodemographic characteristics reduces this association substantially to .016 (model 3), and the coefficient becomes statistically nonsignificant. Adding psychosocial factors (model 4) does not change the estimate at all. Finally, adding the number of days of father contact is estimated to reduce the coefficient to .013 (model 5).

This linear specification imposes the assumption that each $1,000 increment in child support has the same association with child outcomes at each point in the support distribution. A more flexible specification is estimated in panel B, which models child support as a categorical variable. Results presented in panel 1B suggest that the association between total child support received and a child's cognitive skills is most apparent among families that receive support in amounts at or above the median. As in panel 1A, the results in panel 1B suggest that adding sociodemographic factors (model 3) reduces the association substantially but that the addition of psychosocial factors (model 4) has almost no estimated effect. Specifically, estimates in model 4 suggest that cognitive skills among children whose fathers reportedly contribute at or above the median amount of support ($1,500 for those receiving any support; mean is $5,452 and median is $3,850 for the group receiving at or above the median) in the 2 years prior to interview are .142 of a standard deviation higher than the scores among children whose fathers contribute no support. With the addition of a control for father contact in model 5, the estimated coefficient falls to .093 and becomes statistically nonsignificant. Scores among children who receive less than the median amount of cash support (less than $1,500 over 2 years for those receiving any support; mean is $526 and median is $500 for the group receiving more than $0 but less than the median) do not differ (in any of the models) from those among children who receive no support.

In panel 2, the linear specification of child support is not associated with internalizing behavior in any of the models. However, the categorical specification of child support receipt suggests that children whose fathers reportedly pay support in amounts at or above the $1,500 median have more internalizing behavior problems than do children whose fathers reportedly pay no support. The coefficient in model 4 indicates that payments at or above the median amount of support are associated with an increase of .10 of a standard deviation in internalizing behavior. With the addition of a control for father contact in model 5, the coefficient increases in size and becomes marginally significant. Although the estimated coefficients for payments below the median amount of support are never close to statistical significance, they are also positive. This suggests that children whose fathers pay less than the

median amount of support have more behavior problems than those whose fathers pay no support.

Panel 3 presents findings for aggressive behavior problems and suggests that the linear specification of child support receipt is not associated with such behavior problems if the model controls for the lagged dependent variable (panel 3A, models 2–5). However, the categorical specification of child support (panel 3B) reveals a different picture. The marginally significant coefficient in model 4 suggests that total cash support below the median ($1,500) is associated with levels of aggressive behavior problems that are .115 of a standard deviation higher than the levels among children who reportedly receive no support from their father. After adding father contact to the model (model 5), the coefficient remains substantively similar (nearly .1 of a standard deviation) but is statistically nonsignificant. The coefficients for receipt at or above the median are never statistically significant in panel 3B, but they, like those in panel 2B, are positive in the models (3–5) that control for sociodemographic characteristics. Unlike the results for children's cognitive scores (panel 1), the estimated associations of fathers' contributions with children's internalizing and aggressive behaviors become stronger (suggesting more behavior problems) as covariates, particularly the lagged outcome measure and sociodemographics, are added to the models.

Types of support received.—To examine whether the associations discussed above vary across different types of child support, the analyses disaggregate total support into formal and informal cash support. Only results from model 4 (which controls for all covariates except father contact) and model 5 (which controls for father contact) are presented in table 3. Each column in each panel presents coefficients of interest from one regression model. Panel A of table 3 (top panel) presents results from models that use continuous measures of the total amount of formal and informal support received (in $1,000s). Panel B presents results from models that use categorical measures of formal and informal support (below the median and at or above the median for each type of support; the comparison group is composed of those who reportedly received no support).

Estimates from model 4 suggest that $1,000 of informal support is marginally associated with a .04 standard deviation increase in cognitive skills; this estimate is nearly 4 times greater than that for formal support. However, once father contact is added (model 5), the coefficient is reduced by half and is no longer statistically significant. In the categorical specification, the coefficient for reported receipt of informal support at or above the median level ($700 for those with any informal support; mean is $2,566 and median is $2,000 for the group at or above the median) is statistically significant and substantial; cognitive skills

Table 3

ASSOCIATIONS OF TYPE OF CHILD SUPPORT RECEIVED WITH COGNITIVE SKILLS AND BEHAVIOR PROBLEMS

	COGNITIVE SKILLS		INTERNALIZING		AGGRESSIVE	
	Model 4	Model 5	Model 4	Model 5	Model 4	Model 5
Panel A: total formal and informal support:						
Total formal support	.012	.011	−.001	−.001	−.002	−.002
	(1.12)	(1.06)	(.05)	(.06)	(.21)	(.24)
Total informal support	.040+	.022	.001	.001	.013	−.000
	(1.71)	(.90)	(.08)	(.05)	(.64)	(.01)
Panel B: levels of formal and informal support:						
Below median formal support[a]	−.029	−.035	.137+	.138+	.164*	.160*
	(.32)	(.38)	(1.82)	(1.84)	(2.26)	(2.20)
At or above median formal support[a]	.088	.084	.068	.069	−.017	−.020
	(.90)	(.85)	(.82)	(.83)	(.20)	(.23)
Below median informal support[b]	.044	.001	−.001	.002	.048	.021
	(.56)	(.01)	(.01)	(.03)	(.75)	(.32)
At or above median informal support[b]	.197*	.119	.048	.054	.104	.054
	(2.26)	(1.40)	(.59)	(.56)	(1.44)	(.64)

NOTE.—16,902 observations across 10 imputed data sets (1,674–1,792 observations per data set). Coefficients (and *t*-statistics) are from ordinary least squares regressions. Model 4 controls for the lagged dependent variable as well as sociodemographic and psychosocial characteristics. Model 5 adds a control for father contact. All models control for child age at the 5-year assessment, and cognitive skills models (PPVT scores) control for whether the child took the *Test de Vocabulario en Imagenes Peabody* (TVIP, the Spanish version of the PPVT).

[a] Mothers who report receiving no formal support comprise the reference group.

[b] Mothers who report receiving no informal support comprise the reference group.

+ $p < .10$.

* $p < .05$.

** $p < .01$.

*** $p < .001$.

among children who reportedly receive that amount or more are estimated to be nearly .20 of a standard deviation higher than those among children who reportedly received no informal support. The magnitude of this association is over 2 times greater than that for the group reported to receive formal support in an amount at or above the median, even though the average in the category of those receiving formal child support at or above the median ($1,800 or more for those with any formal support; mean is $7,432 and median is $5,955 for the group at or above the median) is nearly twice as much as the average in the category of those receiving informal support at or above the median. With the addition of a control for father contact (model 5), the coefficient for

informal support at or above the median is reduced substantially and becomes statistically nonsignificant; the coefficient for formal support remains essentially unchanged (panel B, cognitive skills model 5). This finding suggests that the estimated benefit of informal support may be driven by fathers' social and physical involvement with children. Consistent with prior research on associations among these different types of involvement (Nepomnyaschy 2007; Garasky et al. 2010), the finding also suggests that these nonpecuniary types of involvement are more closely associated with informal than with formal support.

The third and fourth columns of table 3 focus on children's internalizing behavior problems. Results from panel A suggest that internalizing behavior is not associated with the linear specification of either formal or informal support. In panel B, results from the categorical specifications suggest that receipt of formal support in an amount below the median is associated with .14 of a standard deviation more internalizing behavior problems than is the receipt of no formal support, and the estimate is marginally significant. Controlling for father contact (model 5) does not change the findings.

The last two columns of table 3 explore associations with children's aggressive behaviors. As with those for internalizing behavior problems, the estimates for aggressive behaviors identify no association with the linear specifications of formal and informal support (panel A). In estimates from the categorical specifications, reported receipt of formal support in an amount below the median is associated with nearly .2 of a standard deviation more aggressive behavior problems than is the receipt of no formal support. This coefficient (.164) remains substantial and statistically significant in estimates from the model controlling for father contact. Although the results suggest that informal support receipt is not statistically significantly associated with aggressive behavior, the coefficient (model 4) is substantial for receipt of informal support at or above the median (.10 of a standard deviation) and approaches statistical significance. Addition of the control for father contact reduces that coefficient by half.

Why would reported receipt of child support lead to increases in levels of problem behavior? There are several potential explanations. First, these results may be driven by particular subgroups of fathers. Prior research suggests that children experience adverse effects from involvement with fathers in contexts of high parental conflict as well as from involvement with fathers who have a propensity for violence or engage in substance abuse (Amato and Rezac 1994; Harper and Fine 2006; Ramchandani and Psychogiou 2009). Second, a father who contributes some but very little support or visits some but very little may create stress for the mother and chaos and instability in her household. These conditions may worsen behavior outcomes for children (Dumas et al. 2005; Johnson et al. 2008). Third, reverse causality may account for these

associations; that is, fathers may make child support payments to help out when children are experiencing emotional or behavioral problems. This does not seem a likely explanation for the formal support results, because fathers have little discretion over their formal support obligations.

All three explanations are investigated. First, the model with all covariates except fathers' contact with children (model 4) was estimated separately by whether the mother reported at the 3-year survey that the father has a problem keeping friends or a job because of drugs or alcohol, has spent time in jail or prison, spanked the child in the past month, seriously hurt the mother in a fight since the child's first birthday, was not a good father, had a low score on a mother-reported coparenting measure, and did not cohabit with the mother at baseline (as a proxy for low levels of father commitment at baseline).[2] Due to reduced samples sizes, in general, few of the estimated coefficients are statistically significant. The positive association of child support receipt with problem behaviors is not at all reduced for the regressions estimated among mothers who reported positive father behaviors and characteristics. These results suggest that fathers' characteristics and parents' relationship quality probably do not explain the association of child support with problem behaviors. To test whether the associations between fathers' payments or visits and child behavior problems are mediated by maternal stress, analyses included a measure of mothers' stress at the 3-year survey.[3] The results remain unchanged.

Second, lagged measures of child support (from the prior wave) were substituted for the contemporaneous measures to test for reverse causality, but results remained unchanged. Finally, categorical variables with different cutoffs for the number of days of fathers' contact with children at the 5-year survey were created to test whether high levels of involve-

2. To assess whether a father is a good parent, mothers were asked at the 3-year survey: "What kind of a father do you think the father is?" Possible responses are "excellent," "very good," "good," and "not very good." Fathers are coded as not good fathers if the mother responded "not very good." Quality of fathers' coparenting is measured at the 3-year survey based on mothers' responses to six items about the father: acts like the father you want for your child, can trust him to take care of child, respects schedules and rules that you make, supports you in the way you want to raise the child, can talk with him about problems raising the child, can count on him to take care of the child for a few hours. Mothers are asked to indicate whether each item is always true, sometimes true, or rarely or never true (scored from 1–3). The average score across the six items is reverse coded, such that higher scores indicate better-quality coparenting. Low-quality coparenting is indicated by a score of 1 or 2 vs. 3.

3. Maternal stress is measured at the 3-year survey based on mothers' responses to a four-item measure of parenting-related stress. Mothers were asked to indicate whether they "strongly agree," "somewhat agree," "somewhat disagree," or "strongly disagree" with each item (scores ranged from 1–4). Items include "being a parent is harder than I thought it would be"; "I feel trapped by my responsibilities as a parent"; "I find that taking care of my children is much more work than pleasure"; "I often feel tired, worn out, or exhausted from raising a family." The items are summed and reverse coded such that a higher score indicates more stress.

ment (i.e., frequent visits from a father) would eliminate the association of child support with internalizing and aggressive behaviors.[4] It does not. In short, none of the potential explanations is useful in understanding why fathers' child support payments (particularly low levels of formal support) are associated with increases in behavior problems. This puzzling result is considered further in the discussion section.

Supplementary Analyses

Additional analyses (results not shown) examine the possibility that maternal and child characteristics modify the estimated associations of child support with the three child development outcomes. These characteristics include mothers' race or ethnicity (non-Hispanic white, non-Hispanic black, and Hispanic), education (a high school diploma or less and more than high school), and nativity, as well as children's gender. In general, few of these estimates produce statistically significant results due to reduced sample sizes. However, a few interesting and sometimes unexpected differences emerge between groups. The size of the association of informal support with cognitive skills among children of Hispanic mothers is twice the size of that among children of white and black mothers, but the estimated differences disappear if the model controls for father involvement. The associations of low formal payments with aggressive and internalizing behaviors appear to be stronger for black mothers than for either white or Hispanic mothers. For white mothers, low informal support (i.e., informal support below the median level) is strongly but not quite statistically significantly associated with increases in aggressive (.31) and internalizing behaviors (.36). The associations of low formal support with aggressive behavior and of high informal support with cognitive skills are strong but statistically nonsignificant for boys; they are not present for girls. The positive association of low formal support with aggressive behavior is 3 times larger for mothers with more than a high school education than for those with a high school diploma or less; the association of high informal support with cognitive skills is nearly 3 times as strong for mothers with a high school or lower education as for those with more than a high school education. Finally, associations in these supplementary analyses are generally stronger among foreign-born mothers than among counterparts born in the Unites States, but these estimates are not statistically significant, likely because the samples are much smaller than those employed in the main models.

4. Fathers who were reported to have seen their children 8 or more days in the past 30 (the median for those who saw them any days) are coded to high involvement, and those who saw their children at least 1 day but less than 8 in the past 30 days are coded to low involvement.

Discussion

This study examines the role that fathers' financial contributions to their nonresident children play in the cognitive skills and behavior problems of these children at age 5. Prior research on the association between income and child development led the authors to hypothesize that child support would have a stronger association with cognitive skills than with either of the behavioral outcomes. The current findings suggest that fathers' provision of financial support is positively associated with children's cognitive skills (measured using PPVT scores) and that this positive association is driven by provision of informal support as opposed to provision of formal support. An additional $1,000 of informal child support is associated with an increase of .04 of a standard deviation in cognitive scores, but formal support is estimated to increase scores by only .01. Further, cognitive skills among children of mothers who report receiving at least $700 of informal support in the 2 years prior to interview ($700 is the median of informal support among mothers who received any) are estimated to be nearly .2 of a standard deviation higher than those among mothers who report receiving no informal support. Children of mothers receiving less than this amount do not differ from those of mothers who report no informal support. In general, these estimates are quite comparable to other estimates of family income's relationship with children's cognitive skills (Magnuson and Votruba-Drzal 2009).

The study also finds that much of informal support's positive association with cognitive skills is explained by fathers' nonfinancial involvement with children. In models that control for the number of days that fathers saw their children, the estimated coefficient for informal support is reduced by half and loses statistical significance; the formal support estimate remains the same, though it was never statistically significant. Yet, controlling for other measures of fathers' involvement may not be entirely appropriate in estimating informal support's associations with child outcomes. If providing economic support increases the likelihood that a father visits his children, either because visiting makes him feel close to them or because he wishes to monitor the mother's use of child support, then such a control is inappropriate. If, however, both economic contributions and visitation are related because they reflect general unobserved heterogeneity (such as a father's concern for his children's well-being) or if increases in visitation induce fathers to pay more support, then such a control is important in order to avoid attributing to child support payment what is due to other forms of father involvement. Findings from prior research suggest that fathers' informal support, involvement, and presence in their children's lives are closely linked and are potentially reciprocal (Greene and Moore 2000; Nepomnyaschy 2007; Garasky et al. 2010). The authors lean toward the expla-

nation suggesting unobserved heterogeneity and the simultaneity of these behaviors; however, the question remains open, and additional research is needed on the links among fathers' contributions and contact with children.

Counter to the authors' expectations, this study finds that child support receipt is associated with increases in problem behaviors among children. The estimated association is particularly robust between low formal support and aggressive behavior; the association is also present for internalizing behavior but is only marginally significant. This study tests several potential explanations for this very puzzling result: the role of father violence, substance abuse, and high-conflict relationships with mothers; reverse causality in child support's relationships with behavior problems; and whether low support payments and low levels of father contact might be more problematic for children than no father involvement. The unexpected associations of child support receipt with internalizing and aggressive behaviors persist across most models. This persistence suggests that none of these factors explains the associations.

There are a number of other possible explanations that this study is not able to test, and these possibilities are important areas for future research. First, parents (particularly unmarried or low-income parents) often prefer informal to formal support (Edin and Lein 1997; Waller and Plotnick 2001; Pate 2006), and mothers may only turn to the formal child support system when fathers' informal payments cease. This switch from informal to formal support often accompanies the end of the parents' romantic relationships and potentially a period of conflict between parents (Fertig, McLanahan, and Garfinkel 2007). These types of transitions, as well as conflict between parents, can create both emotional and financial stress in the household. Such stress can lead to increases in problem behaviors among children. Although the authors test for the potential mediating effect of maternal stress, it is possible that this construct is not well measured.

Finally, evidence suggests that regularity of child support payments may be more important than the amount of support received (Ha, Cancian, and Meyer 2011), though there are few studies in this area. If regularity is more important, then low levels of formal (and informal) support may be a proxy for unstable and inconsistent provision of support, which may also be related to unstable and inconsistent contact with fathers. This type of instability may negatively affect children, and particularly children's socioemotional development, giving rise to aggressive and internalizing behavior problems (Petrill et al. 2004; Johnson et al. 2008; Deater-Deckard et al. 2009). A limitation of the current study is its inability to measure the regularity of child support receipt. The robust associations found between child support receipt (particularly formal support) and children's aggressive behavior warrant further research.

Several interesting differences are found in subgroup analyses, though few of the estimates are statistically significant, most likely because of reduced sample sizes. Estimated effect sizes are much weaker for girls than for boys, and they are stronger for children of foreign-born mothers than for those of mothers born in the United States. The study finds few differences by race or ethnicity (once father contact is controlled). This contrasts with results from a study by Argys and colleagues (1998), who find that child support has larger effects among white families headed by unmarried parents than it has among black families headed by such parents. These inconsistencies suggest the wisdom of devoting further attention to issues of race, ethnicity, and culture. They also suggest the need for caution in drawing conclusions based on the results of any one (unreplicated) study. The finding that child support might be particularly important for nonnative mothers is consistent with the authors' hypothesis that, in terms of public benefits or employment opportunities, these mothers may have fewer alternative sources of economic support than their native-born counterparts.

The study has several other limitations. It uses mothers' reports of fathers' contributions and time spent with children as well as mothers' reports of children's behaviors. Mothers may knowingly or unknowingly underreport fathers' contributions and contact in ways that are correlated with their reports of children's behavior. It is noteworthy that children's cognitive scores are assessed directly, and these outcomes are found to be positively associated with reported child support receipt.

Finally, although the study includes a large set of sociodemographic and psychosocial factors, as well as lagged measures of the dependent variables, the analyses may not account for all unobserved differences between fathers who provide support and those who do not. The authors also attempted an instrumental variables approach, which has been employed in some prior research. The approach uses child support enforcement policies and stringency as instruments to adjust for social selection in formal child support payments. The findings from that approach suggest that measures of child support enforcement do not predict mothers' receipt of formal child support and thus could not be used as instruments in this study. One possible explanation for this is that child support policies may have a much stronger association with child support payment for divorced fathers than for fathers with nonmarital children. Recent research also suggests that strong child support enforcement may have no effect on total child support received because enforcement is associated with increased formal support and reduced informal support, which is offsetting (Nepomnyaschy and Garfinkel 2010).

All of the findings in this study highlight the importance of exploring the nonlinear effects of cash support and examining the entire package of contributions that fathers make to their children. This study con-

tributes to a growing body of literature confirming the importance of informal support from fathers, and it raises the possibility that these types of contributions operate in very different ways than those received through the formal system (Nepomnyaschy 2007; Kane and Edin 2008; Garasky et al. 2010; Nepomnyaschy and Garfinkel 2010). Informal support may be particularly important for families headed by unmarried mothers, the largest proportion of single-parent families in the United States (US Census Bureau 2010).

To the authors' knowledge, this is the first study that uses panel data to look at the role of fathers' financial contributions (formal and informal) in young children's development and to focus particularly on families headed by unmarried parents. Though further research is necessary to understand whether these findings hold up as children age, and to explore the unexpected associations of payments with behavior problems, a few preliminary policy implications may be suggested. The finding that child support is positively associated with children's cognitive skills suggests that programs and policies to increase fathers' financial contributions to their noncustodial children are likely to improve children's cognitive development. As discussed in this article and prior studies, fathers who have nonmarital children and live in urban areas have high rates of incarceration, high rates of multiple-partner fertility, low levels of education, and low rates of employment (Waller and Plotnick 2001; Pate 2002; Meyer et al. 2005; Sinkewicz and Garfinkel 2009). All of these factors may impede a father's ability to provide financial support for his children. Thus, policies and programs that aim to increase disadvantaged fathers' economic resources and connection to their children may also lead to important gains to child well-being by not only improving children's economic circumstances but also improving their developmental trajectories.

The particularly positive influence of informal support on children's cognitive skills, especially of support in relatively large amounts, suggests that research needs a better understanding of the mechanisms through which children's outcomes can be improved by informal child support and other related forms of fathers' investments. Although the current findings indicate that informal child support may be preferable to a formal arrangement in terms of promoting children's achievement, the authors hasten to note that informal support is typically much smaller in amount and may be provided less consistently than formal support (Magnuson and Gibson-Davis 2007). Further, the relationship between the provision of formal and informal support is complicated. As mentioned above, mothers often turn to the formal child support system when fathers stop providing informal support, and many fathers (particularly those who are disadvantaged) are not able to provide both types. Although mothers may prefer informal support in the short term, most will eventually turn to the formal child support system (Nepom-

nyaschy and Garfinkel 2010). Therefore, it is possible that the study's findings reflect a short time-span scenario and that the importance of formal support for children's well-being increases in the longer term. This may be particularly salient for the puzzling findings regarding formal support and children's behavior problems. Future waves of Fragile Families data will be helpful in efforts to answer these questions.

Note

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Welfare as Maternity Leave? Exemptions from Welfare Work Requirements and Maternal Employment

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In some states, the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program offers the equivalent of paid maternity leave without job protection to low-income, single mothers of infants. Age-of-youngest-child (AYC) exemptions waive work requirements for TANF recipients after the birth of a child, generally for 3–12 months, depending on the state. This study uses data from the Current Population Survey (1998–2008) to examine whether the availability and length of AYC exemptions are predictive of rates of employment, work, and full-time work among low-educated single mothers with infants. The analysis uses the difference-in-differences (DD) technique, a comparison of outcomes under different policy treatments and between treatment and comparison groups. The results suggest that AYC exemptions are not related to employment or work rates but that living in a state with no AYC exemption is strongly and positively associated with rates of full-time work among low-educated mothers with infants.

Parental leave policies in the United States are notoriously meager relative to the provisions in other industrialized nations. The Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993 (FMLA; 107 Stat. 6) requires most employers to offer 12 weeks of job-protected leave following the birth or adoption of a child. However, the benefit is unpaid and not available to approximately 50 percent of workers because they work in part-time jobs, are employed in small businesses, or have inconsistent work histories (Ruhm 1997; Waldfogel 1999). In striking contrast, the closest economic and political neighbors, Canada and the United Kingdom, respectively offer all workers 17 and 18 weeks of maternity leave with partial wage replacement (Waldfogel 2001).

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Although not conventionally viewed as family leave policy, welfare cash assistance long served as a form of income support for low-income, single mothers caring for infants. A 1996 report to Congress indicates that 20 percent of poor mothers used welfare to support themselves while caring for an infant (Commission on Family and Medical Leave 1996). This purpose was dramatically reenvisioned in 1996 with the passage of federal welfare reforms (110 Stat. 2105), which made welfare receipt time-limited and contingent on work. However, the 1996 law gives states the discretion to exempt welfare recipients with infants and toddlers from the work requirements. Age-of-youngest-child (AYC) exemption policies specify the exact number of months for which a welfare recipient is exempt from the work requirements after a child's birth. During the implementation of the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program, most states set AYC exemptions at between 3 and 12 months. Others elected to offer no AYC exemption, and some made it as long as 60 months. In many states, therefore, mothers of infants became one of the only groups eligible for cash assistance that is not contingent on employment.

To the extent that AYC exemptions allow mothers to stay at home with young children, they are analogous to maternity leave policies, which are shown to benefit both parental employment stability and child well-being (Hofferth 1996; Joesch 1997; Glass and Riley 1998; Ruhm 2000; Berger and Waldfogel 2004; Berger, Hill, and Waldfogel 2005; Hofferth and Curtin 2006). However, in contrast to the unpaid, employer-based leave guaranteed to workers through the FMLA, the leave provided by AYC exemptions may last for much longer periods but offers no job protection. This design has potentially offsetting effects. On the one hand, it creates a financial incentive for women to quit working during pregnancy and for some length of time after a birth, so the policy may be much more likely than maternity leave to produce employment instability. On the other hand, exemptions could promote child development by providing income support that allows mothers to stay home or to work part-time during a child's infancy. This policy and its behavioral effects are particularly relevant because women with low levels of education are more likely than other women to quit a job during pregnancy (Johnson and Downs 2005; Johnson 2008), and low-income children are most vulnerable to the family income fluctuations associated with changes in parental employment (Duncan et al. 1998; Mistry et al. 2002; Dearing, McCartney, and Taylor 2006).

The present study investigates whether the incentives created by AYC exemptions are large enough to affect maternal decisions about work following a birth and, if they do, by how much. The primary effects of this policy should be at the extensive margin; that is, mothers of infants in a state with an exemption of 12 or more months should be less likely to be employed and less likely to be working, if employed, than are

those who live in a state with no exemption or a shorter exemption. In states with lengthy exemptions, the availability of cash assistance that is not contingent on employment could encourage low-income mothers to quit their job during pregnancy, to take unpaid leave from their employer while receiving welfare, or to extend the length of their job search after a child's birth. In addition, most states require full-time work hours (30 or more per week) to meet TANF work requirements, but the structure of AYC exemptions (and other welfare policies) in some states may allow mothers of infants to meet this requirement by combining welfare with part-time employment.

Using 6 years of data collected between 1998 and 2008 in the June Fertility Supplement of the Current Population Survey (CPS), this study estimates whether AYC exemptions from welfare work requirements are associated with the employment and work rates of low-educated single mothers with infants. The statistical approach takes advantage of policy variation across states and, to a lesser extent, over time, as well as of variation between the quasi-treatment group and a comparison group of low-educated married mothers. The approach attempts to isolate the behavioral effects of work requirement exemptions from those of individual differences and concurrent policy and economic changes.

Background

The employment outlook for single mothers changed dramatically in the late 1990s. In the latter half of the decade, the proportion of single mothers in the labor force rose steeply while the labor-force participation rate remained constant among married mothers. As figure 1 shows, the estimated rise was particularly steep for single mothers with infants and low education levels (treatment group): a 16 percentage point increase in employment rates between 1990 and 2000. The speed with which single mothers returned to work after giving birth also increased. From the early 1990s to the early 2000s, the estimated proportion of single women who began working within 11 months of a first birth increased from 48 to 61 percent. Among married mothers, this statistic remained stable at approximately 64 percent (Smith, Downs, and O'Connell 2001; Johnson and Downs 2005; Johnson 2008). Although estimated employment rates among single mothers decreased somewhat during the two recessions of the 2000s, they remain at historically high levels.

These shifts in maternal employment are consequential because infants are considered particularly vulnerable to the timing and extent of maternal employment, the quality of child care, and the sufficiency of family income (Duncan et al. 1998; Shonkoff and Phillips 2000; Thompson 2001). Substantial evidence suggests that maternity leave in the early months of a child's life benefits his or her health and well-being, par-

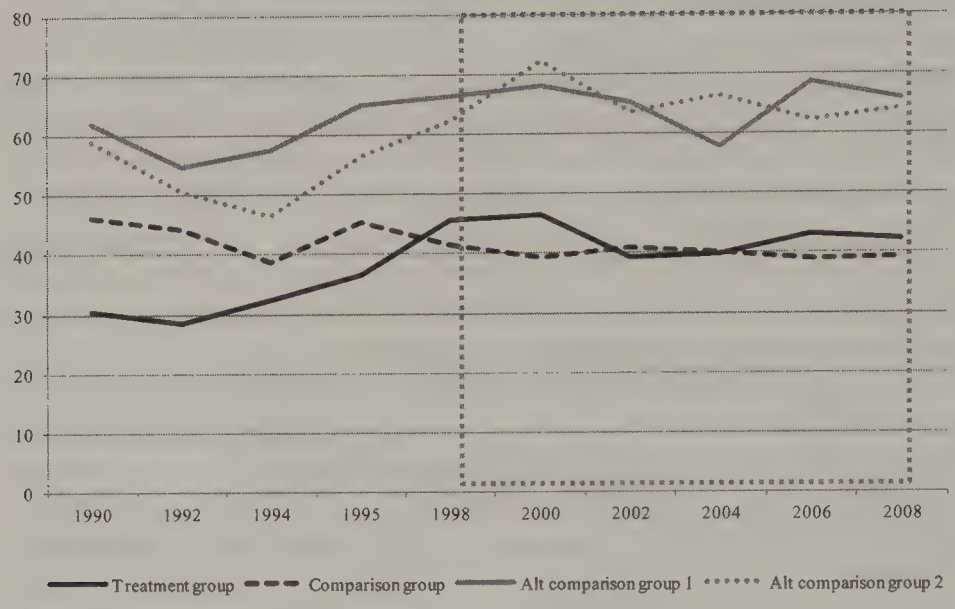


FIG. 1.—Maternal employment rates by marital status, education, and age of youngest child, 1990–2008. Source: Current Population Survey, June Fertility Supplement, 1990–2008. Low-educated = no more than a high school diploma; high-educated = more than a high school diploma. The bordered region from 1998 to 2008 indicates the study period. The treatment group includes low-educated single mothers with infants. The comparison group includes low-educated married mothers with infants. Alt. (alternative) comparison group 1 includes high-educated single mothers with infants; alt. comparison group 2 includes low-educated single mothers with 5- or 6-year-olds.

ticularly through positive effects on parent-child time and breastfeeding rates (Ruhm 2000; Berger et al. 2005). In addition, an increasingly large and rigorous set of studies indicates that full-time maternal employment in the first year of a child's life is associated with modest decreases in child cognitive ability measured into middle childhood (Baydar and Brooks-Gunn 1991; Ruhm 2004; Hill et al. 2005; Brooks-Gunn, Han, and Waldfogel 2010). This association is generally limited to children from advantaged backgrounds, however, and one recent study suggests that it is offset by maternal employment's beneficial relationships with the use of center-based child care and with maternal sensitivity (Brooks-Gunn et al. 2010).

The hastening of employment among single mothers after a birth occurred in the context of several major social policy reforms. One in particular, the AYC exemption from TANF work requirements, applies almost exclusively to single mothers of infants. This policy determines how long a mother may continue to receive welfare after a child's birth without fulfilling the TANF program's standard work requirements. Consistent with the so-called devolution of welfare policy to the local level, the length of AYC exemptions is left to state and, in a few cases, county discretion. Table 1 shows the frequency distribution of AYC ex-

Table 1

FREQUENCY DISTRIBUTION OF STATE AYC EXEMPTION POLICY, 1998–2008

		STATE AYC EXEMPTION LENGTH						
		No Exemption		3–9 Months		12 or More Months		
YEAR	RANGE	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	NO. OF STATES WITH CHANGE
1998	0–60	5	10	17	33	29	57	
2000	0–36	6	12	18	35	27	53	5
2002	0–24	6	12	18	35	27	53	2
2004	0–24	8	16	18	35	25	49	3
2006	0–24	7	14	17	33	27	53	2
2008	0–24	7	14	18	35	26	51	4

SOURCES.—Rowe and Roberts 2004; Rowe and Russell 2004; Rowe et al. 2006; Rowe and Murphy 2006, 2009.

NOTE.—AYC = age-of-the-youngest-child exemption; reflects state policy in July of each year.

emption lengths over the study period. In 1998, exemption lengths ranged from 0 to 60 months and 43 percent of states offered an exemption of less than 12 months. By 2008, no state allowed exemptions to last more than 24 months and half had exemptions shorter than 12 months (Rowe and Roberts 2004; Rowe and Russell 2004; Rowe, Murphy, and Williamson 2006; Rowe and Murphy 2006, 2009). In each year of the study period, between two and five states changed their AYC exemption policy. Appendix table A1 shows the specific AYC exemption lengths in each state and year.

In contrast to previously studied family leave policies, AYC exemptions provide paid leave without job protection, potentially creating an incentive for mothers to quit jobs leading up to the birth. Thus, although family leave policies increase the likelihood that women will take leave (decrease work) but maintain employment, exemptions from welfare work requirements are more likely than such policies to decrease employment rates in the months surrounding a birth. This might be particularly true for employment among low-educated mothers, who not only have disproportionately low rates of FMLA coverage and eligibility but also face financial circumstances that prevent them from taking the unpaid leave offered by the FMLA (Phillips 2002). Finally, although most employer-based leave policies are not designed to affect the intensity of maternal work, AYC exemptions could. Most states require full-time work hours of welfare recipients. Being exempt from those work requirements might allow mothers of infants to combine welfare with part-time employment. Inversely, states with no exemptions or relatively short exemptions might have higher rates of full-time employment among mothers of infants than have states with long exemptions.

Prior Studies

Considerable evidence suggests that welfare work requirements increase employment rates modestly, and there are indications that mothers of young children respond more to welfare reform policies than do mothers with older children (Michalopoulos, Schwartz, and Adams-Ciardullo 2000; Grogger and Michalopoulos 2003). In the 1990s, a set of experimental welfare programs mandated work without providing financial incentives. Participation in most of these programs is found to be positively associated with employment rates among single mothers; employment increases range in size from 3 to 15 percentage points after 2 years, but rates decrease over time (Grogger and Karoly 2005). In a number of studies, the estimated association between work mandates and earnings gains, as well as that between time limits and reductions in welfare receipt, are both larger among parents of preschool-aged children than among parents of older children (Michalopoulos et al. 2000; Grogger and Michalopoulos 2003).

Evidence on the association between AYC exemption policy and maternal employment is less abundant and less conclusive. The proportion of the TANF caseload with a youngest child under 1 year old increased from 11 percent in 1998 to 16 percent in 2008 (author's calculations using data from the US Department of Health and Human Services [2000, 2003, 2004, 2009*a*, 2009*b*, 2009*c*]). This suggests that an increasing proportion of recipients may be using welfare as a type of maternity leave. New welfare applicants appear particularly likely to be caring for infants. The State of Wisconsin reports a doubling of the proportion of new Wisconsin Works applicants with infants between 1998 and 2004, from 18 to 37 percent (Wisconsin Works, or W-2, is the state's TANF program). The local agencies explicitly attribute this change to recipients "using W-2 as a form of paid maternity leave" (Wisconsin Legislative Audit Bureau 2005, 4). A 2001 study of 13 states also finds that about one-third of all new entrants to welfare provide care to an infant (Zedlewski and Alderson 2001).

Steven Haider, Alison Jacknowitz, and Robert Schoeni (2003) use AYC exemption length in a measure of the stringency of welfare work requirements for mothers with children under 6 months of age. They find that stringency is negatively associated with breastfeeding rates. The study does not examine employment rates directly but suggests that short exemptions (or the absence of an exemption) may be positively associated with employment, given that maternal employment is a known barrier to breastfeeding (Lindberg 1996; Roe et al. 1999; Kimbro 2006; Baker and Milligan 2008; Mandal, Roe, and Fein 2010). In a paper using data from 2001, Elizabeth Washbrook and associates (2011) find that a single mother's odds of working within 9 months of giving birth are substantially lower if she lives in a state with an AYC exemption of 12

or more months than if she lives in one with a shorter exemption. A working paper by Jonathan Pingle (2003) analyzes data from 1993 to 1999. In contrast to the findings by Washbrook and associates (2011), Pingle finds that AYC exemption length is not associated with employment rates among single mothers. No existing study examines the associations between AYC exemptions and work hours, though work hours may be an important behavioral outcome of the policy.

These divergent findings point to the difficulty of identifying the effect of AYC exemptions in complex policy and economic environments. Pingle (2003) examines AYC exemptions during their initial implementation in the late 1990s, a period of substantial transformation of welfare and other social policies, as well as historically low unemployment rates. The shortening of AYC exemptions was one small part of these larger forces, and the opportunity offered by the exemption may have been overwhelmed by the much greater pressures and incentives to work. In contrast, Washbrook and colleagues (2011) examine data from a single year, during which unemployment rates spiked for low-skilled workers, to identify the effect of the AYC exemptions exclusively from differences across states and between single and married mothers. They control for a set of other policies that might vary by state and treatment group, but this analytic strategy may lead to bias from unobserved differences between states and groups.

There are several other reasons why the effects of this policy might be muted or vary across data sources and identification strategies. First, the implementation of the policy may be less than perfect, which would lead to measurement error if the actual policy as it is experienced by welfare recipients differs from the written policy used in research. Caseworkers have substantial discretion to determine how they apply work requirements in a given case, and several other policy options allow them to grant mothers a period of time to stay home with young children. Second, low take-up of specific welfare policy components, such as earnings disregards, is found to reduce the effects of those components on behavior (Matsudaira and Blank 2008). Low take-up of the AYC exemption might be expected because of the stigma associated with welfare receipt or because of the administrative burden associated with applying for welfare.

The present study improves on past approaches by combining data from multiple years after the implementation of TANF. These data encompass several business cycles and capture AYC exemption policy changes that occur within states and over time. The study also controls for the welfare and income support policies that changed differentially at the state level over the study period. In addition, it controls for state fixed effects to account for unobserved time-invariant factors that might confound the estimates. Finally, these analyses examine three separate measures of labor-force participation among mothers of infants: em-

ployment, work, and full-time work. The length of AYC exemption could conceivably affect all three.

Methods

Definition of Treatment and Comparison Groups

A difference-in-differences (DD) approach is employed to estimate the effects of AYC exemptions on maternal employment. This approach compares outcomes under different policy treatments (the first difference) as well as between treatment and comparison groups (the second difference). The DD technique is commonly used to study welfare and other policies (Meyer 1995; Meyer and Rosenbaum 2000, 2001; Kaushal and Kaestner 2001, 2005; Kaestner, Korenman, and O'Neill 2003; Acs and Nelson 2004; Hao and Cherlin 2004; Kaushal, Gao, and Waldfogel 2007). Such studies generally define the treatment group for welfare policies as either single mothers or single, low-educated mothers. Given the design and intent of AYC exemption policy, this study narrows the treatment group further to include single, low-educated mothers of infants. The category "low-educated" is defined here to include mothers who have no more than a high school diploma.

Ideally, the definition of the treatment group accurately identifies the subpopulation affected by AYC exemption policies without using data on welfare receipt, so that treatment group membership is not directly affected by the policy being tested. Only including women who are currently receiving welfare in the treatment group would bias the results by excluding women who decided not to apply for or to leave welfare based on existing welfare rules, including the AYC exemption policy. Thus, the subpopulation affected by the policy is all mothers who have infants and who are eligible for welfare in their states; marital status serves as a proxy for that eligibility.

In defining treatment group membership as a function of marital status, the author assumes that AYC exemption policy does not directly influence individuals' decisions about marriage and fertility. A large body of research on the relationships among welfare policies, marriage, and fertility behaviors produce mixed and inconclusive results on this point (Acs 1996; Grogger and Bronars 2001; Hu 2003; Bitler et al. 2004; Joyce et al. 2004; Ryan, Manlove, and Hofferth 2006). Notably, even family cap policies designed specifically to decrease fertility among single mothers are found to have no consistent effect on these behaviors (Grogger and Bronars 2001; Jagannathan, Camasso, and Killingsworth 2004*a*, 2004*b*; Ryan et al. 2006; Camasso and Jagannathan 2009). As a direct test of this identifying assumption, the author estimates models that predict the probability of single motherhood as a function of the length of the exemption policy in a given state (analyses not shown

here). Results in models with and without state fixed effects suggest that the length of AYC exemption is not associated with the probability of being a single mother.

It is important to note that some measurement error is inevitably introduced by using general population characteristics to define treatment. In most cases, this error would bias estimates toward zero because some number of treatment group members are not actually interested in or aware of welfare benefits.

The definition used to identify one or more comparison groups is also a key factor in the internal validity of DD estimates. The best comparison groups are as similar as possible to the treatment group but unaffected by the policy of interest. The present study compares single, low-educated mothers of infants (the treatment group) with married, low-educated mothers of infants (the comparison group). These two groups are quite similar in terms of employment rates and demographic characteristics, but married mothers are much less likely to receive welfare, and if they do receive welfare, they face two-parent policies that are distinct from the standard TANF rules. Figure 1 and table 2 offer support for the use of these particular treatment and comparison groups. Figure 1 shows the trend in work rates among the two. During the study period (1998–2008), the level of employment is quite similar for the treatment and comparison groups, although single mothers' work rates appear more reactive to the economic cycle, particularly the 2001 recession. Although not shown in the figure, the trends in work rates (working, if employed) and full-time hour rates (if working) are also very similar for the two groups.

Table 2 shows weighted population estimates for the measures used in this study. Results are presented separately for the treatment and main comparison groups. Consistent with results in figure 1, the table's estimates for overall work rates and the proportion working full-time hours (if working) do not differ substantially by marital status. There are some noteworthy differences between the two groups, however. Single mothers are younger, have slightly fewer children, and have younger children, on average. Single mothers are also more likely to be black, non-Hispanic, and native born. Table 2 also shows estimates from the measures of state policy and economic context, but there are no statistically significant differences between the treatment and comparison groups in these characteristics.

Two alternative comparison groups are used to test the sensitivity of these results: (1) single, high-educated (some college or more) mothers of infants; and (2) single, low-educated mothers of school-aged children (between 5 and 6 years old). The second group is composed of mothers who have children in an age group that is safely outside the range of any state's AYC exemption policy yet still relatively early in childhood. Both alternative comparison groups are close in size (980 and 1,874,

Table 2

WEIGHTED POPULATION CHARACTERISTICS OF LOW-EDUCATED MOTHERS OF INFANTS, BY MARITAL STATUS

		MEAN OR PROPORTION		
	RANGE[a]	Single Mothers	Married Mothers	SIG[b]
Maternal employment (week prior to survey):				
Employed	0–1	.43	.40	+
Working, if employed	0–1	.88	.88	
Working full-time hours, if working	0–1	.69	.68	
Maternal characteristics:				
Age (years)	18–44	23.91	27.78	**
Number of own children	1–11	2.06	2.27	**
Age of youngest child (months)	0–11	5.73	5.97	*
Race:				**
White	0–1	.67	.87	
Black	0–1	.29	.08	
Other	0–1	.04	.05	
Hispanic	0–1	.26	.35	**
Native born	0–1	.86	.68	**
Eligible for AYC exemption in state[c]	0–1	.69	.69	
State policy and economic context:				
Length of TANF AYC exemption:				
No exemption	0–1	.06	.06	
3–9 months	0–1	.41	.40	
12 or more months	0–1	.53	.54	
TANF full family sanction	0–1	.71	.69	
Short time limit on TANF	0–1	.13	.15	
Required TANF work participation rate for state (%)	0–50	7.76	7.43	
State has refundable EITC	0–1	.19	.20	
Unemployment rate	2.2–8.3	5.09	5.03	
N		1,879	2,364	

SOURCE.—Current Population Survey, June Fertility Supplement, 1998–2008.

NOTE.—AYC = age-of-the-youngest-child exemption; TANF = Temporary Assistance for Needy Families program; EITC = earned income tax credit. Sample includes mothers 18–44 years of age who have no more than a high school diploma and a youngest child under 12 months of age.

[a] Variable ranges do not differ for the single and married subgroups.

[b] Two-sided *t*-tests (scale variables) and chi-square tests (categorical variables) were used to test differences between the characteristics of single and married mothers.

[c] Youngest child's age < exemption length.

+ $p < .10$.

* $p < .05$.

** $p < .01$.

respectively) to the 1,879-member treatment group, but their employment rates are less comparable to those of the treatment group than are the rates for the main comparison group (see fig. 1). All three comparison groups are similarly unlikely to be affected by AYC exemption policies.

Estimation

Descriptive statistics are used to compare the groups' employment rates as a function of the state AYC exemption policy and marital status. This type of descriptive DD analysis can reveal a relationship between policy setting and human behavior, but it can also obscure the true relationship by capturing state-policy or local labor-market characteristics that are correlated with both AYC exemption policies and employment rates. One of many plausible scenarios, for example, is that states with shorter exemption lengths will also have more stringent work requirements and time limits for TANF recipients. These types of omitted variables may inflate or attenuate the descriptive DD estimates, depending on their relationship to AYC exemption policy length and work rates.

In order to control properly for covariates, the analyses next use a multivariate regression model to estimate the relationships of AYC exemption eligibility and length with employment among single mothers. The dependent variables are all binary, but the main analyses use ordinary least squares (OLS) regression to simplify the interpretation of the results. The analysis also tests the sensitivity of the results to logistic regression specifications. The estimation model is:

$$\begin{aligned} Y_{ist} = {} & \alpha_1 + \mathrm{AYC}_{st}\beta_{\mathrm{AYC}} + \alpha_2 \mathrm{SINGLE}_{ist} \\ & + (\mathrm{AYC}_{st} \times \mathrm{SINGLE}_{ist})\beta_{\mathrm{AYC}\times\mathrm{SINGLE}} \\ & + X_{ist}\beta_x + P_{st}\beta_p + S_{it}\beta_S + \varepsilon_{ist}, \end{aligned} \tag{1}$$

where i indexes individuals, s states, and t years. One of three dichotomous variables, Y_{ist}, captures whether individual i reports that she was employed, worked, and worked full-time hours in the week prior to the survey. A vector of dichotomous variables, AYC_{st}, indicates the length of the AYC exemption policy in state s and year t. The coefficients of primary interest are $\beta_{\mathrm{AYC}\times\mathrm{SINGLE}}$, a set of interactions among the AYC exemption length categories and marital status. The resulting coefficients quantify the effect of the exemption policy for the treatment group.

This analysis is conducted three times, each time with increasing levels of controls. The first model includes only X_{ist}, a vector of maternal characteristics (including age, number of own children, age of youngest child, race, ethnicity, and nativity). The second set of controls added, P_{st}, is a vector of state policies and unemployment rates. The final model also includes state fixed-effects, represented by the vector S_{it}, that effectively control for any unobserved time-invariant difference between states. The term ε_{ist} represents any remaining unobserved heterogeneity in the model.

It is important to note that the policies included as control variables

in vector P_{st} are in no way exhaustive of all policies potentially affecting maternal work rates, and they need not be. Once state fixed effects are included in the model, the coefficients of interest are estimated using changes in AYC exemption policy within states over the study period. In this specification, only variables that changed over time remain in the model, and the greatest potential sources of bias are omitted variables that changed differentially by state and group (treatment and comparison) over time. For instance, unemployment rates are included separately as a control variable because they vary over the study period differentially by state and marital status. In contrast, state-mandated, paid maternity leave policies are not included as a control because they do not change substantially during this period.

All models use Huber-White corrected standard errors to account both for nonindependence of observations at the state level and for serial correlation of state characteristics over time (White 1980; Bertrand, Duflo, and Mullainathan 2004). In keeping with the recommendations of Marianne Bertrand and colleagues (2004), this adjustment is implemented using the "cluster" command in Stata statistical software; 50 states plus the District of Columbia are identified as clusters. As Bertrand and colleagues (2004) indicate, the concern about serial correlation in difference-in-differences estimates is reduced in studies like this one that use a relatively small number of time periods (six, in this case) and a policy that varies within states over time.

Data and Measures

The primary source of data for this study is the June Fertility Supplement of the Current Population Survey (CPS). The US Census Bureau fields the CPS once a month on a nationally representative sample of approximately 48,000 households. Standard monthly questions focus on employment status and characteristics (e.g., hours worked, occupation, wage), as well as on such demographic measures as race, sex, and marital status. The June CPS, which has been conducted on a semiregular basis since 1971, includes additional questions on historical and planned fertility for women of childbearing age. The principal advantage of the June Fertility Supplement for the present study is that it collects both the birth month and year of the respondent's youngest child, making it possible to precisely calculate the child's age in months.

The analysis uses a stacked cross-sectional data set of mother-level observations from the 6 biennial years in which the Census Bureau fielded the CPS June Fertility Supplement between 1998 and 2008: 1998, 2000, 2002, 2004, 2006, and 2008. The analytic sample includes female respondents who are 18–44 years old, have a youngest child less than 12 months of age, and have no more than a high school diploma (the article refers

to this group as "low-educated mothers of infants"). The resulting sample of 4,243 includes 1,879 single mothers and 2,364 married mothers.

Maternal employment.—The three dependent variables, respectively, indicate whether the mother was employed, working, and working full-time hours in the week prior to the survey. In the Current Population Survey, the main labor-force status question determines whether the respondent is "working" or "with job, not at work" (other categories include "unemployed" and "not in labor force"). In this study, a respondent is coded as employed in either case but is coded as working only if he or she reported the former. In a separate question, the survey ascertains the respondent's work hours in the week prior to the survey. Working full-time hours is defined for the purposes of this study as working more than 30 hours per week and is conditioned on reporting working in the labor-force status question.

AYC exemption policy.—The welfare rules databooks compiled by the Urban Institute are used to determine the exemption policy for TANF recipients with young children in a given state and year (Rowe and Roberts 2004; Rowe and Russell 2004; Rowe and Murphy 2006, 2009; Rowe et al. 2006). The databooks catalog state welfare rules in effect during July of each year. The current analysis uses individual-level data from June and assumes that the state policy did not change between June and July of the same year. Because it is possible that policies did change between these 2 months, and because one might expect mothers to base their work decisions on the policy they know of during their pregnancy, the analysis also tests the sensitivity of the results to the use of a lagged measure of state AYC exemption policy. This measure captures the policy in effect in the year prior to the individual-level data. The welfare rules databooks cover policy conditions from 1999; values for 1998 are drawn from historical tables in the *Databook* for 2004 policies (Rowe et al. 2006).

Over the study period and across states, the length of AYC exemptions ranges from 0 to 60 months. A set of dichotomous indicators is used to group exemption policies into three categories: none (length of exemption is zero), 3–9 months, and 12 or more months. These categories encompass all possible lengths of state AYC exemption policy during the study period (i.e., there are no 2- or 10-month exemptions). In two states, California and Colorado, AYC exemption policy is set at the county level. Each of these states sets a standard and then allows counties to decrease or increase the length within limits. The analysis uses the coding provided by the welfare rules databooks. That coding reflects the policy in the largest counties (Los Angeles and Denver). A test considers whether the results are sensitive to the exclusion of these states. Table 1 shows the distribution of AYC exemption policy over time, and appendix table A1 shows the policy in each state and year.

Maternal characteristics.—The models include controls for the follow-

ing set of maternal characteristics: age (years), age squared, number of births, age of youngest child (months), age of youngest child squared, race, ethnicity, and nativity. Race is measured with a set of three variables: black, white (reference group), and other. Ethnicity is captured by an indicator for whether the respondent reports that she is Hispanic. Nativity is captured by a measure that indicates whether the respondent reports that she is native born (i.e., born in the United States). Note that the number of births serves here as a proxy for the number of children in the household, as the June supplement does not measure the number of children in the household.

State policies and economic context.—The analyses also control for a set of state policies and unemployment rates. Three key welfare policy measures capture the stringency of work requirements in a state. Values for these measures are compiled from the welfare rules databooks (Rowe and Roberts 2004; Rowe and Russell 2004; Rowe and Murphy 2006, 2009; Rowe et al. 2006). A dichotomous variable indicates whether the state had a full-family sanction policy; that is, a family's TANF cash assistance benefit can be reduced to zero if the adult recipient fails to comply with work requirements. Also included is the percentage of a state's welfare recipients required by the federal government to participate in work activities and a dichotomous variable equal to one if the state's time limit on welfare cash assistance is shorter than the federal limit of 60 months. In addition to these measures of stringency, a dichotomous variable indicates whether the state had a refundable (partially or fully) earned income tax credit. This measure is based on tables produced by the Tax Policy Center (2010). To control for local labor-market conditions, the analysis includes yearly, seasonally adjusted, state unemployment rates extracted on June 1, 2010, from the Local Areas Unemployment Statistics compiled by the Bureau of Labor Statistics (http://www.bls.gov/lau/). The rates reflect a new modeling approach and reestimation employed by the bureau as of March 2005. All of the state policy and economic control variables are also interacted with marital status because the variables either target single mothers directly or are indicators that would vary by marital status over the study period.

Results

Descriptive Analysis

Table 3 shows the proportions that report being employed, working, and working full-time hours in the week prior to the survey. Those proportions are displayed separately by marital status (columns) and AYC exemption length (rows). The differences by exemption length, within marital status groups, are shown in the lower panel. The differ-

Table 3

EMPLOYMENT AMONG LOW-EDUCATED MOTHERS WITH INFANTS, BY EXEMPTION LENGTH AND MARITAL STATUS

	EMPLOYED			WORKING (if Employed)			WORKING FT HOURS (if Working)		
	Single	Married	DD Single-Married	Single	Married	DD Single-Married	Single	Married	DD Single-Married
AYC exemption policy:									
No exemption	.44	.38		.82	.85		.83	.62	
	(.05)	(.03)		(.06)	(.04)		(.05)	(.05)	
3–9 months	.44	.43		.89	.89		.66	.65	
	(.02)	(.02)		(.03)	(.02)		(.03)	(.03)	
2 or more months	.42	.39		.89	.87		.69	.70	
	(.02)	(.02)		(.02)	(.02)		(.02)	(.02)	
Difference by policy:									
No exemption, 3–9 months	.00	−.05	.05	−.07	−.04	−.03	.17**	−.03	.20*
	(.05)	(.04)	(.06)	(.06)	(.04)	(.08)	(.06)	(.06)	(.08)
No exemption, 12 or more months	.02	−.01	.03	−.07	−.02	−.05	.13*	−.08	.22**
	(.05)	(.04)	(.06)	(.06)	(.04)	(.07)	(.05)	(.06)	(.08)
3–9 months, 12 or more months	.02	.04+	−.03	.00	.02	−.02	−.03	−.05	.02
	(.03)	(.03)	(.04)	(.03)	(.02)	(.04)	(.04)	(.04)	(.05)
N	1,879	2,364		827	976		793	899	

SOURCE.—Current Population Survey, June Fertility Supplement, 1998–2008.

NOTE.—AYC = age-of-the-youngest-child exemption; DD = difference-in-differences. Standard errors are in parentheses. Sample includes women 18–44 years of age with a youngest child under 12 months of age and no more than a high school diploma.

* $p < .05$.

** $p < .01$.

ence-in-differences (DD) estimates are shown in the third, sixth, and ninth columns.

One might expect that, among single mothers of infants (but not their married counterparts), the policy design would predict higher rates of employment, work, and full-time hours in states with shorter (or no) AYC exemptions. However, this descriptive analysis provides little evidence that AYC exemptions affect employment or work rates. Neither the differences by exemption length within marital status groups nor the difference between the marital status groups are estimated to be statistically significant. The results for working full-time hours are quite different, however. Those estimates suggest that single mothers in states with no exemption are far more likely to work full-time hours than are single counterparts in states with exemptions of 3–9 or 12 or more months. This difference, between 13 and 17 percentage points, depending on the point of comparison (mothers in states with exemptions of 3–9 months or those in states with exemptions of 12 or more), is statistically significant and not observed among the comparison group of low-educated married mothers with infants. The DD estimates are also large and statistically significant. From this first look, AYC exemptions appear to reduce full-time work rates in the treatment group of low-educated single mothers with infants by as much as 22 percentage points.

Regression Estimates

Table 4 shows estimated OLS regression coefficients and standard errors for models that predict employment, work, and full-time hours. Results from three models are presented for each outcome (the first model includes controls for maternal characteristics, the second model for state policies and unemployment rates, and the third model for state fixed effects). In keeping with results from table 3, these models estimate differences in employment as a function of AYC exemption length and marital status. The interactions between AYC exemption length and marital status (first three rows of table 4) capture the DD estimates for the policy. The next three rows show estimates of the main effects of the length of state AYC exemptions. Results in these rows should be interpreted as estimates of the relationship between AYC exemption length and employment among the comparison group of low-educated married mothers of infants.

The results from estimates of the interactions seem to confirm the DD estimates suggesting that AYC exemption length has no discernible effect on maternal employment or work rates but a substantial association with the likelihood of working full-time hours. Across the three models predicting employment and working in the week prior to the survey, the coefficients for the interactions between AYC exemption

length and marital status are small and not statistically significant. The main effect of AYC exemptions of 3–9 months is surprising; they are associated with an 11 percentage point increase in the probability of work among the comparison group of married mothers relative to that among mothers living in states with longer exemptions. This unlikely finding raises concern that time-variant state differences may be predictive of married mothers' work rates during this period and that the models fail to control properly for those differences.

The estimated relationships between AYC exemptions and the probability that single mothers report working full-time hours hold up as controls are added. In fact, the size of the difference between single mothers working full-time in states with no exemption and those doing so in states with an exemption of 12 or more months is larger in the multivariate models than in the original descriptive estimate and grows with the addition of controls. The final estimate (model 3) suggests that the estimated probability of working full-time hours is 23 percentage points greater among low-educated single mothers with infants if they live in states with no exemption than if they live in states with an exemption of 12 or more months. Note that the length of the exemption makes very little difference in the probability of working full-time hours. This suggests that the estimated effect is due largely to a difference between states with no exemption and states with some exemption of varied lengths. That fact is confirmed by results from a model in which the measure of AYC exemption policy is dichotomous (coded as any exemption or no exemption; results not shown). In this specification, the estimated coefficient from the interaction between treatment group and living in a state with no AYC exemption is nearly identical in size to the final estimate in model 3.

The coefficients on maternal characteristics are generally in the expected directions. For instance, the number of children is estimated to be negatively and statistically significantly associated with the likelihood of employment. Also, there is a nonlinear relationship between the age of the mother's youngest child and her likelihood of employment, such that each additional month of age is estimated to increase the probability that she will be employed. The likelihood increases to a point and then plateaus (the coefficient on the quadratic term is statistically significant and negative, but very small). Few of the state policy and economic condition variables are estimated to predict employment or full-time work among the treatment group, particularly in results from the model (model 3) that also controls for state fixed effects. The state unemployment rate and the state having a full-family sanction are both associated with a lower likelihood that an employed single mother is working (indicated by the coefficients on the interactions between these factors and single).

Table 4

OLS Regression Results Predicting Employment among Low-Educated Mothers of Infants

	Employed			Working (if Employed)			Working FT Hours (if Working)		
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(1)	(2)	(3)	(1)	(2)	(3)
Exemption policy × marital status:									
No exemption × single	.033	.018	.017	.004	−.008	.011	.211**	.218**	.230**
	(.039)	(.047)	(.047)	(.064)	(.057)	(.050)	(.078)	(.074)	(.077)
3–9 months × single	−.023	−.043	−.046	.012	.002	.007	.028	.009	.014
	(.035)	(.042)	(.041)	(.033)	(.035)	(.036)	(.052)	(.053)	(.054)
12 or more months × single (referent)									
Exemption policy:									
No exemption	−.002	−.013	−.024	−.042	−.024	.142	−.100+	−.106	−.096
	(.032)	(.033)	(.127)	(.040)	(.035)	(.120)	(.057)	(.064)	(.087)
3–9 months	.040	.043	.105*	−.009	.004	.019	−.047	−.042	.015
	(.027)	(.026)	(.047)	(.022)	(.022)	(.053)	(.034)	(.035)	(.112)
12 or more months (referent)									
Maternal characteristics:									
Marital status:									
Single	.038*	.102	.103	−.001	.228**	.214**	.018	.000	−.024
	(.019)	(.078)	(.075)	(.023)	(.071)	(.068)	(.035)	(.113)	(.119)
Married (referent)									
Age	.026**	.026**	.026**	−.020*	−.018+	−.018+	.068**	.069**	.071**
	(.009)	(.009)	(.009)	(.008)	(.009)	(.009)	(.018)	(.019)	(.019)
$(Age)^2$	−.000+	−.000+	−.000+	.000*	.000+	.000+	−.001**	−.001**	−.001**
	(.000)	(.000)	(.000)	(.000)	(.000)	(.000)	(.000)	(.000)	(.000)
Number of own children	−.043**	−.043**	−.045**	.008	.008	.010	−.005	−.005	−.008
	(.009)	(.009)	(.009)	(.007)	(.006)	(.006)	(.010)	(.010)	(.010)
Age of youngest child	.022*	.023**	.024**	.168**	.168**	.166**	−.022+	−.022+	−.025+
	(.008)	(.008)	(.008)	(.011)	(.011)	(.011)	(.013)	(.013)	(.013)
(Age of youngest child)^2	−.001	−.001+	−.001+	−.011**	−.011**	−.011**	.001	.001	.001
	(.001)	(.001)	(.001)	(.001)	(.001)	(.001)	(.001)	(.001)	(.001)
Race:									
Black	.015	.019	.036	−.015	−.008	−.027+	.093**	.091**	.088*
	(.030)	(.029)	(.029)	(.017)	(.016)	(.016)	(.031)	(.032)	(.034)
Other	.007	.002	.011	.042	.036	.048	.048	.052	.055
	(.033)	(.036)	(.042)	(.026)	(.028)	(.031)	(.036)	(.036)	(.044)

White (referent)									
Hispanic ethnicity	−.052*	−.041*	−.035	−.015	−.015	−.024	.066*	.068*	.056
	(.020)	(.019)	(.022)	(.017)	(.016)	(.021)	(.033)	(.033)	(.039)
Native born	.108**	.104**	.100**	−.020	−.018	−.016	−.038	−.036	−.027
	(.025)	(.026)	(.026)	(.020)	(.020)	(.020)	(.035)	(.035)	(.037)
State policy and economic context:									
Short time limit on TANF receipt		−.048*	−.078		−.064+	−.134*		.027	−.002
		(.023)	(.052)		(.034)	(.051)		(.045)	(.092)
TANF full family sanction		.032	−.022		.024	.069*		−.013	.005
		(.021)	(.028)		(.018)	(.026)		(.035)	(.040)
TANF work rate		.001	.000		.002*	.002**		.002	.002
		(.001)	(.001)		(.001)	(.001)		(.001)	(.001)
Refundable EITC		−.014	−.039		−.004	−.072**		−.007	.037
		(.035)	(.042)		(.020)	(.025)		(.037)	(.049)
Unemployment rate		−.022*	−.004		.009	.011		.005	.000
		(.010)	(.011)		(.007)	(.010)		(.013)	(.017)
Single × short time limit		.070	.069+		.069	.065		−.034	−.052
		(.042)	(.041)		(.054)	(.053)		(.064)	(.064)
Single × full family sanction		−.032	−.031		−.074*	−.073*		.033	.035
		(.029)	(.029)		(.032)	(.034)		(.061)	(.062)
Single × work rate		−.001	−.000		−.001	−.001		−.002	−.002
		(.001)	(.001)		(.002)	(.002)		(.002)	(.002)
Single × EITC		.026	.035		−.020	−.014		.078	.057
		(.043)	(.041)		(.038)	(.039)		(.059)	(.058)
Single × unemployment rate		−.008	−.009		−.034*	−.032*		.002	.007
		(.014)	(.013)		(.013)	(.013)		(.018)	(.018)
State fixed effects included			X			X			X
Observations	4,243	4,239	4,239	1,803	1,800	1,800	1,692	1,690	1,690
R^2	.036	.041	.033	.282	.291	.289	.036	.04	.036

SOURCE.—Current Population Survey, June Fertility Supplement, 1998–2008.

NOTE.—OLS = ordinary least squares; AYC = age-of-the-youngest-child exemption; TANF = Temporary Assistance for Needy Families program; EITC = state earned income tax credit; FT = full-time. Robust standard errors in parentheses. Sample includes women 18–44 years of age with a youngest child less than 12 months of age and no more than a high school diploma.

+ $p < .10$.

* $p < .05$.

** $p < .01$.

Sensitivity Tests

Table 5 presents estimates from tests of the sensitivity of the main results (table 4, model 3) to a number of alternative specifications. Because the dependent variables are dichotomous and do not meet the assumption of normality, logistic regression models and odds ratios are estimated first. Second, the regression results are weighted to account for the complexity of the survey design of the CPS. Third, observations from California and Colorado are excluded because the AYC exemption policy in those states can vary by county. In every state, there is a concern that AYC exemption policies may not be implemented as they are written into law. This is an important limitation of the current study and cannot be addressed easily. However, the discretion is likely to be greatest in the two states where authority over the policy is exercised at the county level. Fourth, tests are conducted with two alternative comparison groups: single, high-educated (some college or more) mothers with infants and single, low-educated mothers with school-aged children (ages 5–6 years). The final sensitivity test uses a lagged measure of state AYC exemption policy to account for the fact that mothers might make decisions during pregnancy based on their knowledge of state policy at that time. The results for all sensitivity tests are estimated in models that include the full set of controls.

Table 5 shows the results of these tests. The coefficients shown are on interactions between AYC exemption length and marital status. They can be interpreted as estimates of the associations between exemption length and the outcome measures for the treatment group after the association with the comparison group is differenced. Consistent with the main results, these estimates offer almost no evidence that AYC exemptions affect the probability of employment or of working; neither the presence nor length of an exemption is found to affect those outcomes in these tests. The finding of a relationship between having no exemption and the probability of working full-time hours is robust to all model specifications, although the magnitude of the association does decrease slightly in several of the alternative specifications. As the result from the logistic regression suggests, the odds that a low-educated single mother will work full-time hours are 1.14 times as large in a state with no exemption as in a state with an exemption of 12 or more months.

The one aberrant finding in these alternative models is that, when comparison group 2 (low-educated single mothers with 5- or 6-year-olds) is used, living in a state with no AYC exemption is associated with lower employment rates relative to living in a state with a longer AYC exemption among the treatment group. The direction of this effect is counterintuitive and inconsistent with the null results of every other specification predicting employment. A close look at the raw differences in employment rates between the treatment and comparison groups (not

Table 5

RESULTS OF SENSITIVITY TESTS

MODEL SPECIFICATION	EMPLOYED		WORKING (if Employed)		WORKING FULL-TIME (if Working)	
	No Exemption	3–9 Months Exemption	No Exemption	3–9 Months Exemption	No Exemption	3–9 Months Exemption
OLS results from table 4, model 3	.017	−.046	.011	.007	.230**	.014
	(.047)	(.041)	(.050)	(.036)	(.077)	(.054)
Logistic regression (odds ratios shown)	.071	−.193	.200	.169	1.136**	.062
	(.200)	(.173)	(.737)	(.582)	(.370)	(.250)
Weighted for survey design	.01	−.29	−.028	−.019	.197*	.036
	(.065)	(.041)	(.060)	(.036)	(.086)	(.060)
Excluding CA and CO due to county-level discretion	.02	−.047	.025	.007	.193*	.012
	(.054)	(.041)	(.057)	(.037)	(.077)	(.058)
Alternative comparison groups:						
Group 1: High-educated single mothers with infants	.047	.053	.024	.009	.154+	−.034
	(.059)	(.047)	(.079)	(.043)	(.081)	(.052)
Group 2: Low-educated single mothers with 5- or 6-year-olds	−.125**	−.011	−.057	.000	.150+	−.041
	(.045)	(.036)	(.047)	(.027)	(.080)	(.050)
Lagged policy measure	.063	−.033	−.036	−.007	.249**	(.020)
	(.040)	(.037)	(.055)	(.041)	(.081)	(.052)

SOURCE.—Current Population Survey, June Fertility Supplement, 1998–2008.

NOTE.—OLS = ordinary least squares regression. Robust standard errors in parentheses. Sample includes women 18–44 years of age with a youngest child less than 12 months of age and no more than a high school diploma. All models include full set of controls, including mother's characteristics, state policies and unemployment rate, policy-by-treatment interactions, and state fixed effects. Coefficients should be interpreted relative to low-educated single mothers with infants in states that have exemptions of 12 or more months.

+ $p < .10$.

* $p < .05$.

** $p < .01$.

shown) suggests that this difference-in-differences estimate is the result of no difference in treatment group employment rates as a function of AYC exemption policy (all are around 45 percent). Rather, the estimate seems to stem from a large difference in comparison group employment rates in states with no exemption (78 percent) and in states with an exemption of 12 or more months (66 percent). Thus, this result should not be interpreted as an effect of AYC exemption policy but rather as a statistical artifact of using a comparison group with substantially different employment patterns than the treatment group.

Subgroup Analysis

The final step in the analysis is to estimate the effects of AYC exemption length for specific subgroups of mothers with infants. Employment and welfare take-up rates are estimated to differ substantially by maternal race, ethnicity, nativity, age, and the age of youngest child. For instance, many women return to work within 3 months of giving birth. For this reason, one might expect the AYC exemption to have a larger effect when a child is less than 3 months old than it has later in the child's first year. The effect of AYC exemption policy is estimated separately for the following subgroups: white and nonwhite race, Hispanic and non-Hispanic ethnicity, native-born and nonnative, mother's age under 25 and mother's age 25 or older, and child's age 0–3 months and child age 4–11 months. Ideally, one would also examine subgroup differences by the mother's labor force attachment prior to the child's birth. Unfortunately, the June CPS does not offer information on the mother's employment prior to her child's birth. Although most June CPS observations can be linked to information from earlier CPS waves, the timing of those waves relative to the birth of sample mothers' child can be expected to vary greatly.

To ease the interpretation of the results of these subgroup analyses, separate regressions are estimated to predict each of the dependent variables for each subgroup. This approach allows the coefficients on the control variables to differ by group (similar to a fully interacted model). Because the subgroup models have smaller samples than the main models, the subgroup models have less power to identify the precise effects of the policy. For this reason, and because the inclusion of state fixed effects is estimated to make little difference in the main models, the subgroup models do not control for state fixed effects. The consistency of the results are also tested by using pooled models that estimate a full set of two- and three-way interactions among each demographic characteristic, marital status, and AYC exemption length. This specification allows the intercept to vary by group but does not allow the effect of individual control variables to do so. The pooled models examine not only the size and statistical significance of the three-

way interactions but also Wald tests of joint significance for both of the three-way interactions that capture the policy effects.

Results (not presented) suggest that there are only a few statistically significant differences across subgroups in AYC exemption length's associations with on the measured outcomes. Although AYC exemption length is not estimated to affect non-Hispanic mothers in the treatment group, living in a state with a short exemption (3–9 months rather than 12 or more months) is associated with a decrease in employment rates among Hispanic mothers in the treatment group. This counterintuitive difference in employment rates is large, approximately 28 percentage points, and statistically significant in results from both separate subgroup regressions and pooled regressions. In the pooled regression, the Wald *F*-statistic is marginally significant, allowing the author to reject the null hypothesis that both three-way interactions are equal to zero ($F = 2.99$; $p < .10$). The direction of this effect is the opposite of what one would expect. This may suggest that some unobserved heterogeneity among states with short exemptions is particularly relevant to the work decisions of Hispanic mothers and that these models do not properly control for that influence.

Living in a state with no exemption is estimated to be associated with an increase in employment rates among mothers 25 years and older but not among younger mothers. In the subgroup regression for the older mothers (age 25 or older), the coefficient on the two-way interaction between being single and having no AYC exemption (relative to an exemption of 12 or more months) is .39 and marginally significant. In the pooled regression, the estimate for the three-way interaction is statistically significant, as is the Wald *F*-test ($F = 4.35$; $p < .05$). Understanding the precise reason for this effect on older (but not younger) mothers is beyond the scope of this study, but one plausible explanation is that the older mothers may receive less financial support from parents or other family members than younger mothers do. For this reason, the incentive offered by AYC exemptions may be more compelling to older mothers in their decision to work following the birth of a child.

Discussion

Prior descriptive analysis of welfare caseloads in multiple states suggests that welfare is increasingly used as a form of maternity leave by single, low-educated mothers, many of whom do not have access to leave through their employers (Zedlewski and Alderson 2001; Wisconsin Legislative Audit Bureau 2005). However, this study does not find strong evidence that AYC exemptions influence the employment and work decisions of welfare-eligible mothers of infants. The bulk of the findings suggest that AYC exemptions have no effect on the likelihood of being employed or working in the week prior to the survey; neither the presence not length of exemptions is found to affect those outcomes. How-

ever, the probability that single, low-educated mothers of infants report working full-time hours is substantially higher in states with no AYC exemption than in states with one. This relatively large difference, 23 percentage points, is robust to the inclusion of state policies and fixed-effects as well as to the use of several alternative specifications.

Although analyses control for a set of state policies, state unemployment rates, and state fixed effects, the results may be biased by still unobserved differences among states with no exemptions and other states. Because AYC policies changed very little within states over the study period, the most likely culprits for omitted variable bias are between-state differences (e.g., policies, demographic composition, and aspects of the economic climate) that are correlated with both AYC exemption length and maternal work decisions. Thus, one should be cautious in interpreting this relationship between AYC exemption policies and full-time work rates as more than an association.

The mostly null findings are somewhat surprising but not entirely so. The costs of welfare receipt, including stigma and administrative burden, may be too great to make the AYC exemption attractive as an option for paid maternity leave. Because welfare assistance is time-limited, mothers may weigh the benefits of taking an AYC exemption against the cost of expending finite months of allowable welfare receipt. Although many low-educated and low-income mothers are not covered by or eligible for FMLA, those with access to FMLA may prefer to remain employed and take unpaid family leave rather than quit a job to receive welfare and have to search for employment again later. In addition, the study defines the treatment group as single, low-educated mothers of infants; this relatively broad definition may include women who were not attached to the labor force prior to the birth as well as those who are not aware of or interested in welfare benefits. This type of measurement error might also bias the estimates toward zero by washing out the effects on the true treatment population. Unfortunately, the design of the June CPS data does not allow for precise identification of a mother's work status prior to the birth of her youngest child or her current welfare receipt.

The effects of this policy may also be dulled by less than perfect implementation. Welfare caseworkers have considerable discretion over the administration of work requirements and exemptions. This discretion can benefit families by shaping the program requirements and supports to individual needs, but it can also impede efforts to observe the effects of written policy. In a study of welfare-to-work transitions among parents of infants, Gretchen Kirby, Christine Ross, and Loren Puffer (2001) document several examples of this type of caseworker influence on AYC exemption policy implementation. They cite the case of a Milwaukee welfare agency that refers recipients with a child under the age of 3 months (the exemption length) to a set of specialized services for parents of infants.

The services include home visiting and parenting classes. At the end of 3 months, the hours that mothers continue to spend participating in those services can be counted toward welfare's work requirements. Under such a scenario, it would not be surprising to find that exemption length is not predictive of employment status.

Early maternal employment, particularly at full-time levels, is associated with detriments to child cognitive development, although these effects are often limited to children from advantaged backgrounds (Baydar and Brooks-Gunn 1991; Ruhm 2004; Hill et al. 2005). In low-income families, maternal employment can benefit the cognitive and socioemotional development of preschool children if it increases family income (Vandell and Ramanan 1992; Morris, Duncan, and Clark-Kauffman 2005; Dearing et al. 2006). Yet, most welfare-eligible women are employed in the low-skilled labor market, which is characterized by low pay, limited benefits, and few opportunities for advancement.

If AYC exemptions were associated with reduced employment or work among single mothers of infants, there could be short-term benefits for children; however, one might worry that the long-term effects could be negative if the time a mother spends away from the labor market ultimately decreases her employability and earning potential. This study suggests instead that AYC exemptions allow low-income mothers to work part-time while their children are young. Perhaps they combine earnings with welfare receipt that is not contingent on full-time employment. The findings propose a compelling argument for why states should offer AYC exemptions and encourage eligible mothers to take them up (if they do not already): the policy appears to encourage mothers of infants to remain connected to the labor market but to work less intensely while caring for young children. Such a combination may have net short- and long-term benefits for both children and society. Welfare and other safety net programs have become increasingly linked to employment, and they are designed primarily for workers. Thus, it is all the more important that states use discretion over program policies and administrative rules to make those programs flexible and accommodating to the realities of low-wage workers' life demands. The AYC exemptions are an example of a rule that warrants additional attention from researchers, policy makers, and program administrators if the policy is to be effective in promoting the dual goals of family self-sufficiency and child well-being.

Appendix

Table A1

STATE AYC EXEMPTION POLICY, 1998–2008

State	1998	2000	2002	2004	2006	2008
Alabama	12	3*	3	3	3	3
Alaska	12	12	12	12	12	12
Arizona	0	0	0	0	0	0
Arkansas	3	3	3	3	3	3
California†	12	12	12	12	12	12
Colorado†	12	0	0	0	0	0
Connecticut	12	12	12	12	12	12
Delaware‡	3.25	3.25	3.25	3.25	3.25	12*
District of Columbia	36	12*	12	12	12	12
Florida	3	3	3	3	3	3
Georgia	12	12	12	12	12	12
Hawaii	6	6	6	6	6	6
Idaho	0	0	0	0	0	0
Illinois	12	12	12	12	12	12
Indiana	6	3*	3	3	12*	3*
Iowa	0	0	0	0	0	0
Kansas	12	12	12	12	12	6*
Kentucky	12	12	12	12	12	12
Louisiana	12	12	12	12	12	12
Maine	12	12	12	12	12	12
Maryland	12	12	12	12	12	12
Massachusetts	24	24	24	24	24	24
Michigan	3	3	3	3	3	3
Minnesota	12	12	12	3*	3	3
Mississippi	12	12	12	12	12	12
Missouri	12	12	12	12	12	12
Montana	0	0	0	0	0	0
Nebraska	3	3	3	0*	0	0
Nevada	12	12	12	12	12	12
New Hampshire	24	24	24	24	24	24
New Jersey	3	3	3	3	3	3
New Mexico	12	12	12	12	12	12
New York	3	3	3	3	3	3
North Carolina	60	12*	12	12	12	12
North Dakota	4	4	4	4	4	4
Ohio	12	12	12	12	12	12
Oklahoma	3	3	3	3	3	3
Oregon	3	3	3	3	3	3
Pennsylvania	12	12	12	12	12	12
Rhode Island	12	12	12	12	12	12
South Carolina	12	12	12	0*	12*	12
South Dakota	3	3	3	3	3	3
Tennessee	4	4	4	4	4	4
Texas	48	36*	12*	12	12	12
Utah	0	0	0	0	0	0
Vermont	18	18	24*	24	24	24

Table A1 (*Continued*)

State	1998	2000	2002	2004	2006	2008
Virginia	18	18	18	18	18	18
Washington	4	4	4	4	4	4
West Virginia	12	12	12	12	12	12
Wisconsin	3	3	3	3	3	3
Wyoming	3	3	3	3	3	3

SOURCES.—Rowe and Roberts 2004; Rowe and Russell 2004; Rowe and Murphy 2006, 2009; Rowe et al. 2006.

NOTE.—AYC = age-of-the-youngest-child exemption; reflects state policies in July of each year.

* Indicates timing of state policy changes.

† Counties have some discretion in expanding or reducing this exemption.

‡ Thirteen weeks prior to 2008.

Note

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Welfare Reform and College Enrollment among Single Mothers

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Some research argues that the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 (PRWORA) substantially reduced college enrollment among targeted poor, single mothers, but empirical evidence is limited on the law's negative effects. Applying a difference-in-difference-in-difference method to data from the October Supplements to the Current Population Survey for the years 1990–2008, this study finds that PRWORA's estimated effects on single mothers' college enrollment vary by enrollment status (full- or part-time) and by the type of institution (2- or 4-year college). Although PRWORA is associated with statistically significant decreases in full-time enrollment in 2- and 4-year colleges between the start of PRWORA and 2002, it also is associated with slight increases in part-time enrollment in both 2- and 4-year colleges between 2003 and 2008. The findings of this study shed important light on issues that deserve attention in the reauthorization of PRWORA.

With the start of a recession at the end of 2007 (National Bureau of Economic Research 2010), the United States began paying new attention to the importance of education as a means to fight poverty and to return to economic prosperity (White House n.d.). The Obama administration's budget for fiscal year 2011 proposed an increase of more than 7 percent in discretionary funding for education (US Office of Management and Budget 2010). One of the goals of the president's plan is to expand Americans' access to college by increasing money for the Pell Grant program and revitalizing community colleges. Implicit in this plan is an effort to make the United States the country with the highest proportion of college graduates by 2020. In the 2009 State of the Union address, President Barack Obama (2009) asked every American to commit to at least 1 year of higher education or career training.

The president's proposal recognizes that access to education and training programs provides one clear pathway out of poverty, especially

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during an economic recession and times of high unemployment. However, critics argue that federal and state governments deny or limit welfare recipients' access to postsecondary education, and these individuals compose the very population for which higher education can be a key to sustainable, good-paying jobs, a route out of poverty, and an alternative to welfare dependency (Shaw et al. 2006). The Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 (PRWORA; 110 Stat. 2105) sets the trend by limiting welfare recipients' access to higher education in many important ways.

These provisions have been widely criticized since PRWORA's passage in 1996, because nearly half of welfare recipients lack basic education and the minimum qualifications necessary to gain good-paying jobs that would enable them to stay off of welfare (London 2005). Contrary to welfare reform's assumption that rapid labor-force entry would bring more promising outcomes for welfare recipients than would improving their education, the literature collectively indicates that even nontraditional students attending 2- and 4-year colleges experience a 5–10 percent increase in earnings after graduation; this increase is very similar to the benefit that traditional young students reap from their educational investment (Kane and Rouse 1995; Leigh and Gill 1997).

The scheduled 2011 congressional reauthorization of PRWORA rekindled debate about the law's provisions on work requirements and access to education (Haskins 2009). The 1996 law's effect on school enrollment among adult welfare recipients has been a point of contention for more than a decade, yet little convincing empirical evidence is available from the literature. Some studies suggest that the number of welfare recipients enrolled in postsecondary education diminished by nearly half in the early years of PRWORA, from at least 650,000 in 1995 and 1996 to 350,000 in 1999 (Price 2005). Reports from the US Department of Health and Human Services indicate that the share of welfare recipients in training and education programs dropped from more than 12 percent in fiscal year 1995 to nearly 6 percent in fiscal year 1998 (for the trend, see fig. 1; US Department of Health and Human Services 1996, 1997, 2000, 2001, 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007*a*, 2007*b*, and 2008).

This drop in the school enrollment of welfare recipients occurred during a time when such enrollment increased among the general population. The US Department of Education indicates that, between 1991 and 2001, the rates of participation in educational programs generally grew among adults not enrolled full-time in secondary school (2002; Aud et al. 2010). Such programs include basic skills or general equivalency diploma (GED) programs, part-time postsecondary programs, and career- or job-related courses. The participation rates leveled out for several years and then began to fall in 2005 (see fig. 2). Although the figures cannot be taken as evidence that PRWORA negatively influ-

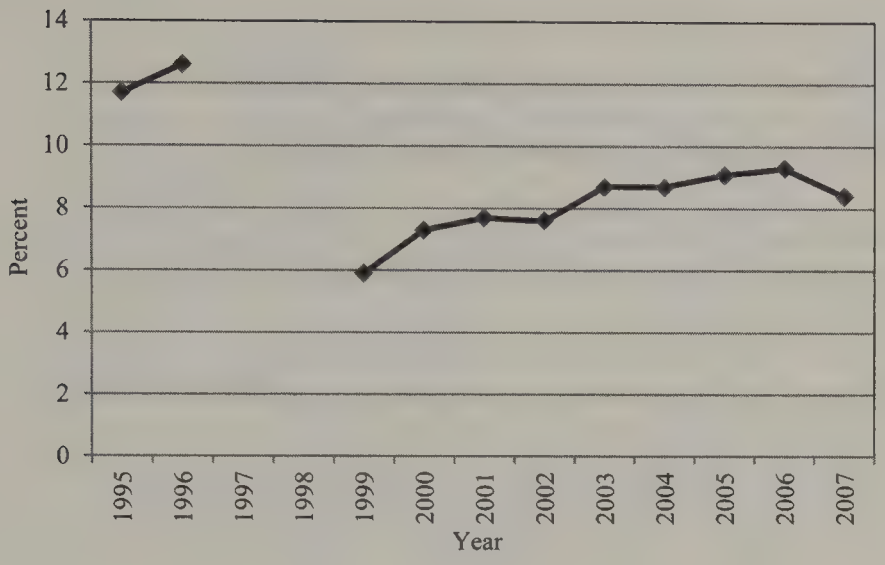


FIG. 1.—Percentages of adults receiving welfare (AFDC or TANF) and participating in training or education, by year. Sources: US Department of Health and Human Services (1996, 1997, 2000, 2001, 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007*a*, 2007*b*, and 2008). AFDC = Aid to Families with Dependent Children program benefits; TANF = Temporary Assistance for Needy Families program benefits. Year 1995 and 1996 results include enrollment in the Job Opportunities and Basic Skills Training Program under AFDC or self-initiated training. For 1999–2007, the rates refer to all adults. For 1995 and 1996, the rates refer to female adults only (18 years old or older). Data for 1997 and 1998 are not available.

ences the school enrollment of welfare recipients, the trends do call for an investigation of this issue.

Estimating the 1996 reform's effects on school enrollment is not as straightforward as counting the number or share of school attendees among all welfare recipients. Apart from PRWORA's influences, changes in the composition of the welfare caseload may affect the school-enrollment rate. Reductions in welfare recipients' school enrollment may also be tied to economic changes or to policies other than PRWORA (e.g., the Earned Income Tax Credit). Isolating the effects of PRWORA from those of other factors is challenging. The ideal approach would be to compare a counterfactual group of welfare recipients who did not experience PRWORA with a group of recipients who did experience it, but such a comparison group is not possible because PRWORA affects all welfare populations.

Applying a difference-in-difference-in-difference (DDD) method to the October Supplements of the Current Population Survey (CPS) for the years 1990–2008, this study examines whether PRWORA negatively affects the college enrollment of targeted single mothers. The DDD analysis, together with an examination of state and year fixed effects, enables this study to isolate the effects of PRWORA from the effects of other economic and policy factors. This study makes two major contri-

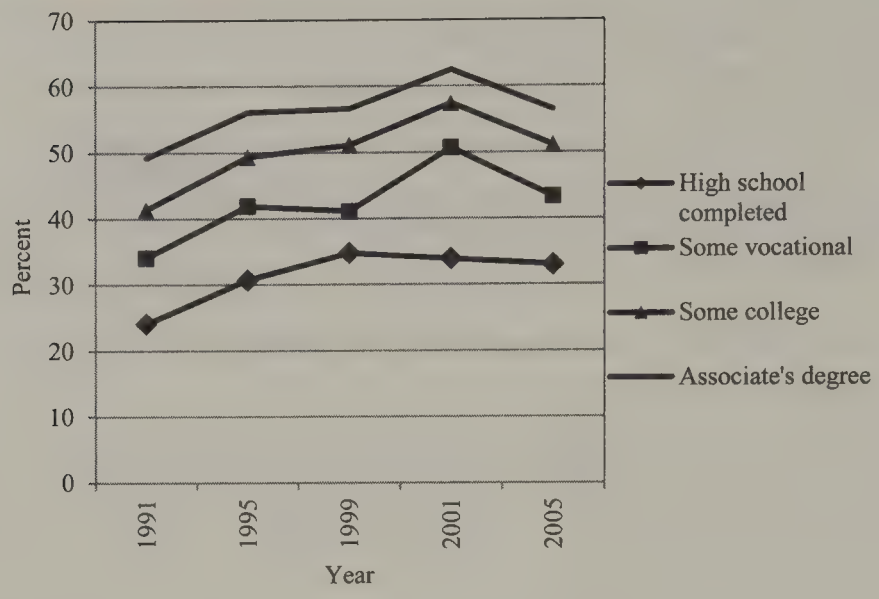


FIG. 2.—Rates of participation in adult education by highest educational degrees attained. Source: Snyder, Dillow, and Hoffman (2009). Adult education refers to basic-skills classes, general equivalency diploma classes, ESL classes, part-time postsecondary education (i.e., college), career or job-related courses, apprentice programs, and personal-interest courses. Adults include persons who are 17 years or older and not enrolled full-time in secondary education.

butions. First, it attempts to differentiate PRWORA's effects on full-time enrollment from those on part-time enrollment and its effects on enrollment in 2-year colleges from its effects on enrollment in 4-year colleges. Second, it examines whether PRWORA's effects persist throughout the period between implementation and the end of the study period (2008) as the rules that govern the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families program (TANF) changed in most states during the period.

PRWORA and College Enrollment

The 1996 law requires that a certain share of each state's welfare caseload participate in work activities for a minimum number of hours per week in a month (i.e., a weekly minimum averaged across each month). The mandatory work requirements began in fiscal year 1997. The law required 25 percent of all families on assistance in that year to perform 20 hours of weekly work. This requirement increased annually until fiscal year 2002, when it enjoined that 50 percent of families on welfare must work 30 hours per week (the rules require more hours of work from two-parent families than from single-parent families; 110 Stat. 2105 [1996], Sec. 407). The Deficit Reduction Act of 2005 (120 Stat. 4 [2006]), which reauthorized PRWORA, further increased the required

work participation rates by changing the base year used in the calculation of the caseload reduction credit from fiscal year 1995 to fiscal year 2005.[1] Critics of PRWORA (e.g., Shaw et al. 2006) argue that the work requirements present a serious barrier to education for welfare recipients whose time is already limited by the responsibilities of single motherhood.

The 1996 law also establishes a preference for paid employment over educational or training activity. The policy specifies that job-skills training, education directly related to employment, secondary school, equivalency classes, and other specified activities can count toward a recipient's required work activity hours only if those efforts are combined with at least 20 hours per week of participation in subsidized or unsubsidized employment or community service (the requirement is 30 hours per week for two-parent families). Vocational education training is the only educational activity that need not be combined with paid work in order to be counted toward the work-hours requirement.[2] It may be counted toward the work requirement for only 12 months in a recipient's lifetime. Moreover, the 1996 law requires each state to ensure that the work requirement is met by a specified percentage of its caseload and limits the percentage of the caseload that can meet this requirement through educational activities. No more than 30 percent of welfare participants counted toward a state's work rates can meet work requirements by participating in vocational education training or in educational

1. For each percentage point that a state's welfare caseload declined from its 1995 level, the caseload reduction credit reduces the base percentage of TANF families that must be engaged in work in the state. For example, if a state's welfare caseload declined 40 percent since 1995, then the all-family work participation rate that it must meet is 10 percent. Because of substantial declines in welfare caseloads in most states since 1995, 33 of the 50 states were required to meet an all-family rate of 10 percent or less in fiscal year 2003. The Deficit Reduction Act of 2005 effectively raised the work-participation requirement rate. The act mandated that states' caseload reduction credit for a given year be determined by the percent of caseload declined since fiscal year 2005 (45 C.F.R. 261 [2008]; see also US Government Accountability Office 2005).

2. Prior to passage of the Deficit Reduction Act of 2005, the US Department of Health and Human Services chose to promote state flexibility by not issuing regulations on states' definitions of work activities. As a result, states used various definitions of work activities and counted them toward meeting different categories of work. Across 10 states, English as a second language programs, for example, were counted as part of as many as four different categories (job skills training, secondary school or education directly related to employment, community service, and vocational education; US Government Accountability Office 2005). In order to minimize state-by-state inconsistencies in the definitions, the Deficit Reduction Act defines countable work activities. For example: "Job skills training directly related to employment means training or education for job skills required by an employer to provide an individual with the ability to obtain employment or to advance or adapt to the changing demands of the workplace"; "education directly related to employment (for those without a high school or an equivalent degree) means education related to a specific occupation, job, or job offer"; and "vocational education training means organized educational programs that are directly related to the preparation of individuals for employment in current or emerging occupations" (US House of Representatives 2008, table 7–27).

activities covered by teen head-of-household provisions. One might expect that these regulations would limit welfare recipients' opportunities to obtain a college education.

A close examination of the literature suggests, however, that the estimated effect of PRWORA on college enrollment may not be as straightforward as expected (Greenberg, Strawn, and Plimpton 2000; US Government Accountability Office 2005; Taniguchi and Kaufman 2007). There are several possible reasons for this. First, state governments have considerable flexibility in designing their own TANF programs and defining what activities constitute participation. Thus, a state can count participation in postsecondary education (or other education and training activities) as work (Greenberg et al. 2000).

Second, caseload-reduction credits effectively reduced participation requirements for most states in fiscal year 2003, such that federal provisions required work activity from 10 percent or less of the state's caseload. Thus, a majority of states were able to allow their recipients to engage in noncountable activities, including higher education and college attendance, without incurring financial penalties from the federal government (US Government Accountability Office 2005). In addition, many states funded welfare recipients' college attendance with the Maintenance of Effort funds spent under separate state programs, and states are not required to include those recipients in the calculation of federal work-participation rates.[3] Thirty-two states had such programs in fiscal year 2006 (US Department of Health and Human Services 2009). The Urban Institute's Welfare Rules Database (n.d.) indicates that, as of 2009, 24 states have always counted participation in postsecondary education as work (probably through their separate state programs), but 11 states have never done so since the passage of PRWORA. In 2002, for instance, at least 25 states counted college attendance as work.

Third, it is not clear how mandatory employment affects welfare recipients' decisions to enroll in college. Although full-time work may keep some welfare recipients from enrolling in college, paid employment also may enable some of them to enroll in college at least part-time. Moreover, labor-market experiences may motivate some recipients to invest in their education and skills without imposing much of a time constraint on their ability to attend college part-time (Taniguchi and Kaufman 2007). Literature also suggests that the associations between full-time employment and college enrollment may differ depending on the type of college. Whereas full-time work is negatively associated with enrollment in 4-year colleges or universities, it is positively associated with enrollment in 2-year colleges (US Department of Education 2002). In this sense, the distinctions among the

3. The Maintenance of Effort rule in PRWORA requires states to spend at least 75 percent of their historic level on needy families. That level is defined as fiscal-year 1994 spending on programs replaced by TANF. The law also allows states to use separate state assistance programs with maintenance of effort funds (US House of Representatives 1998).

types of colleges and enrollment status are important, because common, nontraditional, adult students, such as poor single mothers, are more likely to choose 2-year colleges than 4-year colleges and are more likely to be enrolled part-time than full-time (US Department of Education 2002; Aud et al. 2010). Therefore, PRWORA's effects on college enrollment are likely to vary by enrollment status (full- or part-time) and by type of college (2- or 4-year).

Fourth, the effects of PRWORA on college enrollment may be difficult to predict because it is not clear whether those effects lasted throughout the postreform period examined in this study. Single mothers' employment increased substantially in the mid- and late 1990s, but the increase leveled off by 2002, and their employment actually declined in the mid-2000s (US House of Representatives 2008). As the discussion notes above, the mandatory work requirements increased from 20 to 30 hours of weekly work in 2002, but caseload-reduction credits made the federal work participation requirements meaningless for most states by fiscal year 2003. If TANF's negative relationship with college access works in part through strong work requirements, a reduction in work participation rates might begin to mitigate the program's effects around 2003. In response to declines in work rates, the Deficit Reduction Act of 2005 created much stricter work-participation requirements. The federal government issued the final regulations to implement the act's new requirements in February 2008 (45 C.F.R. 261 [2008]) and scheduled them to become effective in fiscal year 2009 (US Government Accountability Office 2010). This timing makes it hard to predict whether PRWORA's effects on college enrollment were persistently negative throughout the postreform period under study.

Previous Studies

Despite the competing perspectives and political debates, there are few empirical estimates of the 1996 law's effects on college enrollment among the target group. The methods and findings of existing studies leave many open questions (Jacobs and Winslow 2003; Covington and Spriggs 2004; Shaw et al. 2006; Dave, Reichman, and Corman 2009). Jerry Jacobs and Sarah Winslow (2003) study the influence of single motherhood on college enrollment, expecting to find that the relationship is negative and increased after the reform. The findings are inconsistent, however, and do not offer direct evidence that PRWORA decreased college enrollment among targeted single mothers. Kathleen Shaw and associates (2006) examine welfare recipients' college enrollment in six states selected for their different approaches to welfare reform. Their data suggest that, under PRWORA, all but one of the six states have a smaller percentage of welfare recipients enrolled in postsecondary schools than they did prior to the law. The study does not employ multivariate analyses, however; it

is unknown whether the declines in the enrollment rates are statistically significant and whether the declines are attributable to PRWORA.

Kenya Covington and William Spriggs (2004) take a different approach, examining the relationship between state welfare rules and poor mothers' college enrollment. Their difference-in-difference (DD) analyses show that the likelihood of attending college is statistically significantly lower among welfare recipients in states where college attendance is counted as a work activity than among nonrecipient poor mothers or former welfare recipients in the same states. However, their study provides limited evidence on college enrollment changes before and after PRWORA because it uses only two data points (i.e., 1996 and 1998). The study also uses nonrecipient poor mothers and former recipients as the comparison groups. This violates an assumption of the DD approach: a group that is not supposed to be affected by a policy under study should be compared to a group targeted by the policy (Kaushal, Gao, and Waldfogel 2007).

The most recent and relevant study is by Dhaval Dave and associates (2009). It also applies DD regression analyses to data from the CPS October Supplements (1992–2001) and examines the effects of the 1996 reform on the college enrollment of single mothers who are aged 21–49 and have no prior college education. Their findings indicate that the reform statistically significantly decreases the sample's probability of overall college enrollment by 1.1 percentage points (12 percent reduction from the baseline mean) and of full-time enrollment by 1.2 percentage points (26 percent decline from the baseline mean). Although the study by Dave and associates offers the most convincing evidence among all existing studies, its models may omit some relevant variables because the DD estimates do not control for factors that might affect women's school enrollment. For instance, many time-varying factors, such as changes in child care, child-rearing costs, and receipt of the Earned Income Tax Credit, could affect the school enrollment of mothers differently than the enrollment of nonmothers. Also, the analyses do not examine the effects of PRWORA on enrollment in different types of colleges, despite the fact that 2-year colleges target more disadvantaged groups (e.g., nontraditional adult students, full-time working students, and welfare-prone populations) than do 4-year colleges (US Department of Education 2002). Finally, the data for the study by Dave and associates go only up to 2001, so the study is not able to examine whether the negative effect of PRWORA on college enrollment lasted throughout the 2000s.

Hypotheses

This study examines three hypotheses. The first holds that PRWORA is associated with declines in college enrollment during the study period and

that the declines are greater among single mothers who lack postsecondary degrees than among other mothers who lack degrees. The 1996 law is primarily designed to target single mothers with low levels of education. A substantial decrease in college enrollment among this group could thus be attributed to the policy with some level of confidence if all other determining factors are equal.

The second hypothesis is that the degree of reduction in college enrollment differs by enrollment status (part- or full-time) and the type of college (2- or 4-year). The study hypothesizes that PRWORA's negative effects are concentrated on full-time enrollment and enrollment in 4-year colleges. The law's requirements increased employment and the hours of work. Those increases may help poor single mothers to enroll in college part-time, but an increase in their level of attachment to the labor market would make it more difficult for mothers to enroll in college full-time. Similarly, it is reasonable to expect that PRWORA's effects on enrollment in 4-year colleges are more negative than the policy's effects on 2-year college enrollment, because combining paid employment with intensive academic work in 4-year colleges is generally more challenging than combining work with job-related certificate programs in 2-year colleges.

The study's final hypothesis is that PRWORA's effects on college enrollment differ across the policy's implementation stages. As the discussion states above, the welfare caseload and work participation rates declined dramatically by 2002. By 2003, separate state program participation rates declined in more than 30 states. Several factors may influence welfare recipients' enrollment in college and PRWORA's effects on that enrollment. By dividing the postreform years into two periods, this study tests the persistence of PRWORA's effects on college enrollment. It hypothesizes that PRWORA's negative effects have faded since 2003.

Methods

Data and Sample

This study uses data from the School Enrollment Supplement Files of the October CPS for the 1990–2008 period. The CPS is a monthly national survey of noninstitutionalized civilians (i.e., those outside penal and mental facilities or homes for the aged) from about 57,000 US households. It is designed and conducted by the US Census Bureau to collect demographic and labor-market data. The School Enrollment Supplement files are suitable for this study because they contain information on individuals' school enrollment and provide large, nationally representative samples for the adult populations that PRWORA targets. In addition, the Supplement File data on individuals' school enrollment

can be matched with CPS core file data on their employment, marital status, and motherhood status (US Census Bureau 2008). States' annual unemployment rates come from the US Bureau of Labor Statistics' website on local-area unemployment statistics (http://www.bls.gov/lau) and from the US Census Bureau's Statistical Abstracts of the United States site (http://www.census.gov/compendia/statab). In this study, state identifiers are used to merge the state unemployment data with the October CPS School Enrollment Supplement files.

The final sample for this study includes 283,803 women between ages 21 and 49 who reported that they have a high school or an equivalent diploma but lack a postsecondary degree in the 1990–2008 data. In the 1990 and 1991 data, CPS does not distinguish individuals with a 2-year associate's degree from those with 2 years of a bachelor's education. For these 2 years of data, therefore, individuals with at least 2 years of postsecondary education are considered to have a postsecondary degree and are excluded from the sample. In other words, women in this pool were potential candidates for enrollment in 2-year or 4-year colleges. The sample is further divided by marital status and motherhood status (discussed in more detail below). The total sample includes 56,197 single mothers (19.80 percent of the sample); 60,084 single, childless women (21.17 percent); 118,847 married mothers (41.88 percent); and 48,675 married, childless women (17.15 percent).

Variables and Measures

The study's primary dependent variable is college enrollment. The CPS's October School Enrollment Supplement collects information on enrollment in regular schools, the grade level of enrollment, and the status of enrollment (full- or part-time). Women who report that they are enrolled in college are classified as college enrollees (coded one, otherwise zero), and those who report that they are enrolled in college full-time are categorized as full-time college enrollees (coded one, otherwise zero). Enrollment in 2-year colleges is differentiated from enrollment in 4-year colleges, thereby creating four enrollment categories: (*a*) part-time enrollment in 2-year colleges, (*b*) full-time enrollment in 2-year colleges, (*c*) part-time enrollment in 4-year colleges, and (*d*) full-time enrollment in 4-year colleges.

The independent variables can be described within four constructs: (*a*) motherhood status, (*b*) marital status, (*c*) PRWORA, and (*d*) estimates of interactions among the three major independent variables. Motherhood status measures whether the women reported having at least one child under age 18 in the family at the time of survey (coded one) or none (coded zero). Marital status measures whether the women reported that they are single (coded one) or married (coded zero) at

the time of survey. In the following multivariate analyses, single mothers are considered to be the population targeted by PRWORA. The influence of PRWORA is measured by dividing the study period into three smaller periods based on dates when states implemented major changes to their welfare policies (Crouse 1999): (*a*) the prereform period extends from 1990, when the Aid to Families with Dependent Children program (AFDC) was in force, until the point at which a state's welfare program began operating under the PRWORA rules; (*b*) the first reform period extends from the year of the state's first PRWORA implementation through 2002; and (*c*) the second reform period covers 2003–8. Because many states began implementing PRWORA in the middle of a year, PRWORA's periods are measured in months. For instance, if a state implemented PRWORA for all months of 1998, the welfare period variable for that state is assigned a value of 1; if the state implemented PRWORA for only 6 months of the year, the welfare period variable is assigned a value of .5. Finally, four interaction terms are employed to explore relationships among the three major independent variables: (*a*) motherhood status by marital status, (*b*) motherhood status by welfare-reform period, (*c*) marital status by welfare-reform period, and (*d*) motherhood status by marital status by welfare-reform period. The triple interaction term, *d*, is the primary independent variable for this study.

The control variables include women's race or ethnicity, age, age squared, the annual unemployment rate in the state where the respondent lives, an indicator of state use of AFDC waivers, and dummy variables for the state and year. Age is measured continuously. A variable for age squared is included in the model to detect any nonlinearity in the relationship between age and college enrollment. Because the sample is composed of an adult population older than 25, the probability of college enrollment is expected to decrease nonlinearly. Race and ethnicity are measured with four categories: white, African American, Hispanic, and other. Between 1993 and 1997, prior to the implementation of TANF, most states effected statewide waivers to AFDC rules. Because of this, states' AFDC waiver use is measured in periods similar to those employed for the measure of welfare periods. Doing so allows the author to control for AFDC waivers in the multivariate analyses (Crouse 1999). Values from 0 to 1 are assigned to states for each year. The value assigned for a given year depends on the number of months in which the state operated under any of six AFDC waivers (i.e., 0 for no months, .5 for 6 months, and 1 for all 12 months of waiver implementation). Measured waivers include those related to time limits, work exemptions, sanctions, increases in earnings disregards, family caps, and work requirements. States' unemployment rates are measured as continuous variables.

Statistical Analyses

This study applies a standard DDD method that is used widely to study the effects of policy interventions on changes in individual behaviors. A DDD model is an extension of a DD model. In a DD model, the outcome under study is observed for a treatment group and a comparison group both before and after the policy is introduced. Also, estimates calculate the average difference between the comparison group's outcome before the policy and its outcome after the policy. The difference is subtracted from the average difference in the treatment group's outcomes. This is done to deal with biases in the outcome due to permanent differences between the treatment and comparison groups as well as with biases due to a general trend in the outcome.

A potential problem with using a DD method for this study is that factors other than PRWORA (e.g., college tuition, child-care costs, and the Earned Income Tax Credit) may affect the rate of college enrollment among single mothers relative to that among single, childless women (Meyer and Rosenbaum 2000, 2001). This study explores a more robust DDD analysis to account for this limitation in the DD method. In this study's approach, married women (mothers as well as childless women) serve as another comparison group. Because factors other than PRWORA may also affect married women's college enrollment, having them as another comparison group makes it possible to control for such factors. A DDD estimate can be obtained by calculating the differences in the trends of college enrollment between single mothers and single childless women (DD_1) and comparing those differences with the differences in the trends of college enrollment between married mothers and married childless women (DD_2). Because married women are far less likely to receive public assistance than single women, DD_2 captures any potential difference in single women's college enrollment that is influenced by factors other than PRWORA. The model for this analysis of repeated cross-sectional data can be written as follows:

$$y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 M + \beta_2 R + \beta_3 S + \beta_4 (M \times R) + \beta_5 (M \times S) + \beta_6 (R \times S) + \beta_7 (M \times R \times S) + u, \quad (1)$$

where y is college enrollment (i.e., enrollment part-time in 2-year college, full-time in 2-year college, part-time in 4-year college, and full-time in 4-year college), M is a dummy variable that denotes motherhood (i.e., having at least one child), R is a dummy variable that denotes one of the postreform welfare periods (first or second reform period), and S represents being single. Three terms, $(M \times R)$, $(M \times S)$, and $(R \times S)$, represent interactions among the three variables. Here, the coefficient of the triple interaction term, β_7 (which represents the DDD estimate), is now the coefficient of interest and can be expressed as shown below. The subscripts of M, R, and S denote that each variable is measured as a dummy variable.

$$\beta_7 = (Y_{M_1,S_1,R_1} - Y_{M_1,S_1,R_0}) - (Y_{M_0,S_1,R_1} - Y_{M_0,S_1,R_0}) - (Y_{M_1,S_0,R_1} - Y_{M_1,S_0,R_0}). \quad (2)$$

The DDD estimate is based on three assumptions. The first is that comparison groups are similar to the target group but unaffected by PRWORA. Two-parent families accounted for approximately 5 percent of all TANF families between 1998 and 2006 (Crouse, Hauan, and Rogers 2008). To the extent that this comparison group is influenced by PRWORA, the DDD analyses will produce a downward bias. The second assumption is that PRWORA did not substantially change women's marital status. Findings from the literature on this topic are inconclusive. Whereas Deborah Roempke Graefe and Daniel Lichter (2008) find that PRWORA is associated with marriage among welfare-prone, disadvantaged mothers (i.e., those with low educational attainment and a high-risk background), the association is not statistically significant. Marianne Bitler and her colleagues (2004) show that the reform led to declines in the numbers of new marriages and new divorces. Given these and other conflicting findings, the direction of any marriage effect may be difficult to predict, and associations in either direction are probably small. The final assumption is that the convergence or divergence in the pattern of college enrollment between mothers and nonmothers does not differ by marital status prior to PRWORA (Kaushal et al. 2007). This assumption is examined before the study proceeds to the multivariate analyses.

Ordinary least squares regression models are employed instead of logistic regression models because the literature warns that the magnitude of the interaction effect in nonlinear models does not equal the marginal effect of the interaction term, the sign might be in the opposite direction, and the effect's statistical significance is not easily calculated by standard software (Ai and Norton 2003; Norton, Wang, and Ai 2004). Due to potential clustering of data, robust standard errors are used in obtaining all statistical significance levels for the regression coefficients.

Findings

Adjusted Percentages of College Enrollment: Testing the Assumption of DDD

Table 1 presents the estimated percentages of college enrollment by women's marital status, motherhood status, and welfare-reform period. The percentages are adjusted for women's age, age squared, race and ethnicity, state unemployment rate, and state and year dummy variables; that is, the percentages of women enrolled in a 2- or 4-year college stem from ordinary least squares regression analyses that hold the aforementioned variables constant at their means. The results suggest that the estimated percentages of women enrolled in college are much higher

Table 1

ADJUSTED PERCENTAGES OF WOMEN (Ages 21–49) ENROLLED IN COLLEGE, BY REFORM PERIOD

	ALL WOMEN (N = 283,803)	SINGLE		MARRIED	
		Mothers (n = 56,197)	Nonmothers (n = 60,084)	Mothers (n = 118,847)	Nonmothers (n = 48,675)
Total college enrollment:					
Prereform	10.66	14.98	20.66	5.16	8.65
First reform	9.68	13.90	19.47	3.91	6.96
Second reform	11.12	15.38	20.92	4.46	7.34
2-year college part-time:					
Prereform	2.57	3.32	3.90	1.93	2.18
First reform	2.16	2.91	3.40	1.50	1.63
Second reform	2.24	3.02	3.41	1.53	1.58
2-year college full-time:					
Prereform	1.70	3.04	3.07	.98	.88
First reform	1.55	2.86	2.85	.78	.59
Second reform	2.12	3.51	3.50	1.19	.96
4-year college part-time:					
Prereform	2.62	3.11	4.56	1.67	2.64
First reform	2.01	2.56	3.87	1.01	1.92
Second reform	2.08	2.67	3.78	1.04	1.79
4-year college full-time:					
Prereform	4.66	7.49	12.02	.71	3.88
First reform	4.66	7.38	11.91	.47	3.49
Second reform	5.59	8.26	13.07	.65	3.77

NOTE.—The prereform period extends from 1990 through the point at which a state began implementation of its Temporary Assistance for Needy Families program (TANF). The first reform period extends from the implementation of TANF through 2002. The second reform period extends from 2003 to 2008. The percentages are adjusted for women's age, age squared, race and ethnicity, state unemployment rate, and state and year dummy variables.

among single women than among married women. In addition, they are higher for nonmothers than for mothers, regardless of respondents' marital status and the welfare period. For example, 14.98 percent of single mothers and 20.66 percent of single nonmothers report that they were enrolled at some point in the prereform period; 5.16 percent of married mothers and 8.65 percent of married nonmothers report that they were enrolled at some point in that period.

Most important, the overall trend of college enrollment follows the same pattern across all four mother-marital groups in that enrollment is estimated to decline between the prereform period and the first reform period. During the second reform period, it bounces back to the prereform level. The results suggest that the data basically meet the aforementioned assumption of the DDD method; the convergence or

Table 2

DDD Estimates of Total College Enrollment

	Total Enrollment			
	First Reform		Second Reform	
	Coefficient	SE	Coefficient	SE
Mothers	−.0146***	.0021	−.0156***	.0021
Single	.0905***	.0030	.0869***	.0030
Welfare period	−.0052	.0049	−.0105**	.0037
Mothers × single	−.0384***	.0039	−.0366***	.0039
Mothers × welfare period	.0069*	.0030	.0081**	.0031
Single × welfare period	−.0037	.0044	.0004	.0044
Mothers × single × welfare period	−.0135*	.0058	−.0055	.0060
N	203,853		201,162	

Note.—DDD = difference-in-difference-in-difference; AFDC = Aid to Families with Dependent Children program. All analyses include women's race and ethnicity, age, age squared, state unemployment rate, state AFDC waivers, and dummy variables for the state and year.

* $p \leq .05$.

** $p \leq .01$.

*** $p \leq .001$.

divergence in the pattern of college enrollment between mothers and nonmothers does not differ by marital status prior to PRWORA.

The estimated enrollment trend is generally consistent across the types of colleges and enrollment status. Particularly noteworthy is the finding that, across all four mother-marital groups, the overall decreases from the prereform period to the first reform period are relatively greater for part-time enrollment than for full-time enrollment. The DDD analyses below investigate whether the degree of the decrease in college enrollment from the prereform to each reform period is statistically significantly greater (or smaller) among single mothers than among the comparison groups.

DDD Estimates of Total College Enrollment

Table 2 presents the estimates of the DDD analyses on total college enrollment by the first and second reform periods. All models control for the effects of race and ethnicity, age, age squared, the state unemployment rate, state use of AFDC waivers, and state and year dummy variables. The results suggest that PRWORA is associated with a 1.35 percentage-point reduction from the prereform period to the first reform period in the probability that single mothers attend any type of college ($p < .05$). This result supports the first hypothesis, namely, that PRWORA will be associated with declines in college enrollment and that those declines will be greater among single mothers than among other

Table 3

DDD Estimates of Part- and Full-Time Enrollment in 2-Year Colleges

	Part-Time Enrollment		Full-Time Enrollment	
	First Reform	Second Reform	First Reform	Second Reform
Mothers	−.0034**	−.0041**	−.0008	−.0014
	(.0012)	(.0012)	(.0009)	(.0009)
Single	.0141***	.0133***	.0120***	.0107***
	(.0018)	(.0018)	(.0014)	(.0014)
Welfare period	−.0003	−.0018	−.0010	.0014
	(.0029)	(.0021)	(.0022)	(.0016)
Mothers × single	−.0051*	−.0047*	.0057**	.0063**
	(.0023)	(.0023)	(.0020)	(.0020)
Mothers × welfare period	.0019	.0009	.0014	.0011
	(.0017)	(.0017)	(.0012)	(.0013)
Single × welfare period	−.0035	−.0055*	.0009	.0035
	(.0025)	(.0025)	(.0021)	(.0022)
Mothers × single × welfare period	.0017	.0070*	−.0067*	−.0040
	(.0032)	(.0032)	(.0028)	(.0030)
N	187,453	183,811	186,003	182,757

Note.—DDD = difference-in-difference-in-difference; AFDC = Aid to Families with Dependent Children program. All analyses include women's race and ethnicity, age, age squared, state unemployment rate, state AFDC waivers, and dummy variables for the state and year. Standard errors are in parentheses beneath the coefficients.

* $p \leq .05$.

** $p \leq .01$.

*** $p \leq .001$.

sample members. Moreover, the magnitude of this association is quite similar to the results in the study by Dave and colleagues (2009).

In the last column of table 2, the coefficient for the triple interaction term suggests that PRWORA is not statistically significantly associated with college enrollment among single mothers during the second reform period. This result basically supports the study's third hypothesis; it suggests that PRWORA's negative effect does not last throughout both reform periods but fades away in the second (2003–8) period.

DDD Estimates of Part- and Full-Time Enrollment in 2-Year Colleges

Table 3 presents estimates from the DDD analyses of part- and full-time 2-year college enrollment. The results suggest that PRWORA is not statistically significantly associated with single mothers' part-time enrollment in 2-year colleges during the first reform period, but it is associated with a .70 percentage-point increase in their enrollment during the second reform period ($p < .05$). This increase probably reflects a drop in the paid employment and relaxation of the restrictions to college access in state TANF rules as both occurred during this second reform period.

Table 3 also suggests that PRWORA has a slightly different relationship with single mothers' full-time enrollment in 2-year colleges. The result for the three-term interaction indicates that PRWORA is associated with

Table 4

DDD Estimates of Part- and Full-Time Enrollment in 4-Year Colleges

	Part-Time Enrollment		Full-Time Enrollment	
	First Reform	Second Reform	First Reform	Second Reform
Mothers	−.0094***	−.0095***	−.0030*	−.0027*
	(.0013)	(.0013)	(.0013)	(.0013)
Single	.0212***	.0209***	.0716***	.0693***
	(.0019)	(.0019)	(.0023)	(.0023)
Welfare period	−.0031	−.0140***	−.0018	.0037
	(.0028)	(.0022)	(.0033)	(.0026)
Mothers × single	−.0129***	−.0130***	−.0438***	−.0425***
	(.0023)	(.0023)	(.0029)	(.0029)
Mothers × welfare period	.0026	.0065***	.0021	.0012
	(.0017)	(.0017)	(.0018)	(.0019)
Single × welfare period	−.0077**	−.0081**	.0009	.0068+
	(.0027)	(.0026)	(.0035)	(.0035)
Mothers × single × welfare period	.0052	.0066*	−.0135**	−.0133**
	(.0033)	(.0032)	(.0043)	(.0044)
N	187,387	183,739	191,905	188,863

Note.—DDD = difference-in-difference-in-difference; AFDC = Aid to Families with Dependent Children program. All analyses include women's race and ethnicity, age, age squared, state unemployment rate, state AFDC waivers, and dummy variables for the state and year. Standard errors are in parentheses beneath the coefficients.

+ $p < .10$.
* $p \leq .05$.
** $p \leq .01$.
*** $p \leq .001$.

a .67 percentage-point reduction in single mothers' full-time enrollment during the first reform period ($p < .05$), but the estimated term is statistically nonsignificant for the second reform period.

Consistent with this study's hypotheses, PRWORA's interactions with single mothers' college enrollment are estimated to vary by enrollment status and reform period. Although PRWORA's interaction with single mothers' part-time, 2-year college enrollment is not negative in either reform period, the estimated term is negative for the policy's interaction with full-time enrollment, and the estimate is statistically significant for the first reform period. The results show signs that the size of these negative relationships wanes from the first to the second reform period. The statistically nonsignificant term for PRWORA's interaction with single mothers' part-time enrollment turns statistically positive in the second reform period. The statistically negative term for PRWORA's interaction with single mothers' full-time enrollment becomes nonsignificant in the second reform period.

DDD Estimates of Part- and Full-Time Enrollment in 4-Year Colleges

The results presented in table 4 suggest that PRWORA's interaction with single mothers' part-time enrollment in 4-year colleges is positive but statistically nonsignificant in the first reform period. Consistent with the findings for part-time enrollment in 2-year colleges, however, PRWORA

is associated with a statistically significant .66 percentage-point increase in single mothers' part-time, 4-year college enrollment during the second reform period ($p < .05$).

Most important, the table clearly suggests that PRWORA's overall negative interaction with single mothers' college enrollment is primarily due to its negative and statistically significant interaction with their full-time enrollment in 4-year colleges. The estimated interactions are large and negative. They persist throughout both reform periods. Specifically, PRWORA is associated with a reduction of 1.35 percentage points ($p < .01$) in the rate of full-time, 4-year-college enrollment among single mothers during the first reform period and with a reduction of 1.33 percentage points in the second reform period ($p < .01$).

Consistent with the results for 2-year college enrollment, the estimates in table 4 suggest that PRWORA's interactions with single mothers' enrollment in 4-year colleges differ by enrollment status. Specifically, the terms for the policy's interactions with part-time enrollment are positive and become statistically significant in the second reform period, but those for interactions with full-time enrollment are negative and statistically significant, regardless of the reform period.

Discussion and Implications

In summary, the empirical evidence from the analyses supports the study's three hypotheses. That is, PRWORA is indeed associated with a statistically significant decrease in the total college enrollment among single mothers who lack postsecondary degrees. This overarching statement, however, masks important but not-well-understood variations in PRWORA's relationship with single mothers' college enrollment, because the estimates suggest that changes in college enrollment differ by enrollment status, college type, and PRWORA's implementation stage. In particular, the results suggest that PRWORA is associated with statistically significant reductions in single mothers' full-time, 2-year college enrollment during the first reform period. The policy is also associated with statistically significant declines in single mothers' full-time, 4-year college enrollment throughout both reform periods. However, the results indicate that PRWORA is not statistically significantly associated with single mothers' part-time enrollment in 2- or 4-year colleges during the first postreform period. A surprising finding that does not stem from the hypotheses is that PRWORA is associated with slight yet statistically significant increases in single mothers' part-time enrollment in both 2- and 4-year colleges during the second reform period.

Overall, the results suggest that PRWORA's negative interactions with single mothers' college enrollment are explained primarily by reductions in their full-time enrollment in 4-year colleges. As discussed above,

some single mothers responded to stringent work requirements by increasing the number of hours worked, but an increase in work hours may impose substantial time constraints that discourage mothers' enrollment in 4-year colleges, especially full-time enrollment. Some PRWORA rules (e.g., time limits) may also make it difficult for poor single mothers to pursue a 4-year college degree full-time. Given that college enrollment, particularly full-time enrollment in 4-year colleges, tends to prolong the duration of welfare dependency among recipients (London 2005), poor single mothers who intend to bank their time on welfare for future economic security might become unwilling to invest in college education under the pressure of the 5-year time limits.

According to the findings of this study, the story is different for part-time enrollment in 2- and 4-year colleges. Although increases in employment might offer single mothers additional incentives and opportunities for part-time college enrollment, states' separate TANF programs also may increase the number of single mothers who have access to college, at least part-time. These potential increases may be relevant in interpreting results for the second reform period, when meeting the federal work requirements was not the major concern of most state governments. Together, these findings warn that looking only at total college enrollment masks PRWORA's relationships with part- and full-time enrollment in 2- and 4-year colleges. The findings are generally consistent with the findings by Shaw and her colleagues (2006), who state that PRWORA is associated with declines in welfare recipients' full-time enrollment and increases in their part-time enrollment. Both Shaw and associates' study (2006, 62–63) and the current one suggest that welfare recipients' enrollment shifted from full-time to part-time enrollment after the 1996 reform. In addition to reducing poor, single mothers' likelihood of obtaining bachelor's degrees, this trend also may have reduced their college graduation rate, because part-time enrollment is generally associated with a high risk of dropping out of school before completing a degree (Aud et al. 2010).

The present study employs DDD analyses in an effort to control for potential effects of policy and economic factors other than PRWORA (e.g., child care subsidies, the Earned Income Tax Credit, state children's health insurance programs) that could affect women's enrollment behaviors differently by their marital and motherhood statuses. Nevertheless, the findings cannot be interpreted as causal estimates of the effects of PRWORA because unobservable or missing factors could affect the results of this study. Similarly, the results are based on national data and thus do not explain a variation in the estimated associations across individual states with different TANF rules and implementation strategies.

Given the importance of postsecondary education for one of the least educated groups in the country, this study's findings shed important

light on the reauthorization of PRWORA.[4] They are especially relevant in regard to the requirement of weekly work hours. In reauthorization, certain of PRWORA's education-related features should be revisited to bring welfare policy into line with the national agenda to offer all populations the opportunity to pursue postsecondary degrees. To the extent that some part-time paid employment has a positive influence on college enrollment, labor-force attachment should probably remain one of the goals of the welfare system. However, as the findings of this study imply, increasing the stringency of work requirements is not likely to encourage single mothers' college enrollment, especially full-time enrollment. Equally important and suggested by this study is the observation that some of PRWORA's rules, such as the lifetime limits on vocational education training (12 months) and cash welfare receipt (5 years), are worth revisiting in the reauthorization process. These rules were established to prohibit low-educated single mothers from enrolling in colleges, especially 4-year programs.

Note

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The Dynamics of Women Disconnected from Employment and Welfare

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This study analyzes factors associated with transitions into and out of disconnectedness, which is defined as being disconnected from the labor market, welfare, and other substantial financial supports. Findings are based on discrete-time hazard models estimated with a sample of New Jersey welfare recipients followed for 5 years. Work history, human capital, policy environment, and economic conditions are found to be the factors most strongly associated with the dynamics of disconnectedness. More work history and human capital are associated with a lower probability of becoming disconnected and a higher probability of leaving disconnected status for employment. Individuals relying on unemployment insurance benefits are at high risk of becoming disconnected. This suggests that the expiration of such benefits often leads to disconnectedness. Receipt of sanctions for noncompliance with welfare's work requirements are found to triple the risk of becoming disconnected. Finally, transitions into disconnectedness increase sharply with increases in the unemployment rate.

In the mid- to late 1990s, single mothers left welfare rolls at an unprecedented pace. The number of recipients in the Aid to Families with Dependent Children program and its successor, the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program, fell by 56 percent from 1995 to 2000 (US Department of Health and Human Services 2004*a*, 2004*b*, 2004*c*, 2004*d*, 2004*e*, n.d.). Departure from welfare often accompanied entry into employment, which contributed to a dramatic 18 percentage-

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point increase over this period in the proportion of employed single mothers (US Census Bureau 2008). During this time, newly implemented welfare policies at the federal and state levels included strong provisions aimed at inducing single mothers to leave and stay off of welfare. In particular, policies imposed lifetime limits on welfare receipt and mandated increasingly stringent requirements that recipients engage in work-related activities. Those who failed to comply were sanctioned with reduction or loss of benefits. A large body of research documents that the caseload declines and employment gains among single mothers resulted from the combined effects of welfare reform, the 1990s economic boom, and expansions of the Earned Income Tax Credit (Blank 2002; Grogger and Karoly 2005).

Although evidence links these policy changes to the rise in employment and earnings for the overall population of single mothers, there also is recognition that welfare reform restricts or removes a means of financial support for those unable to become or remain employed, giving rise to a group of single mothers disconnected from both employment and cash welfare assistance. Because of their tenuous economic circumstances, disconnected welfare leavers are of particular interest to policy makers. Two additional factors heighten interest in this population. First, there is concern that poor economic conditions will increase the number of disconnected single mothers. For instance, an economic downturn began in 2001, and unemployment grew. Despite this, welfare caseloads continued to decline or remained stable throughout the 2000s, rather than growing (as was the typical experience in earlier periods of economic downturn; Fremstad 2003). Second, the Deficit Reduction Act of 2005 (120 Stat. 4) effectively toughened mandates for the fraction of a state's welfare caseload that must engage in work-related activities (Parrott et al. 2007). Both of these factors may raise the risk of disconnectedness among single mothers who have difficulties remaining employed.

Research Context

Because of their extremely low incomes and tenuous economic circumstances, disconnected TANF leavers are of particular concern to policy makers. Despite their policy relevance, disconnected former TANF recipients have been the focus of relatively little research.[1] A few studies estimate the prevalence of disconnectedness and identify barriers to employment faced by disconnected welfare leavers, but little is known about the dynamics of disconnectedness or the factors associated with transitions

1. A much larger literature looks at general employment and employment barriers among welfare leavers. See, e.g., Moffitt et al. (2002), Johnson and Corcoran (2003), Seefeldt and Orzol (2005), and Wood, Moore, and Rangarajan (2008).

into and out of this status. In an early cross-sectional study of disconnected former TANF recipients, Pamela Loprest (2003) finds that one in seven adults who left welfare between 2000 and 2002 did not have income from employment, TANF, Supplemental Security Income (SSI) benefits, or a working spouse. Compared to those who left TANF for work, disconnected TANF leavers are found to be more likely to face economic hardship and such employment barriers as poor health and low levels of education. Examining a sample of former welfare recipients over a 6-year follow-up period beginning in 1997, Lesley Turner, Sheldon Danziger, and Kristin Seefeldt (2006) find that most former welfare recipients were disconnected at some point during the follow-up and that nearly 10 percent of the sample was "chronically disconnected" (233; i.e., disconnected for more than one-quarter of the follow-up). They also find that former welfare recipients who face more employment barriers are at greater risk of becoming chronically disconnected.

Rebecca Blank and Brian Kovak (2009) use data from the US Census Bureau's Current Population Survey and the Survey of Income and Program Participation to document the increase in disconnectedness from the mid-1990s through the mid-2000s. Their analysis of 2001 data from the Survey of Income and Program Participation confirms the finding from earlier studies that disconnectedness is common among low-income single mothers; 40 percent are found to experience disconnectedness at some point during the 3-year panel. They find that most spells begin and end because of a change in earnings. This highlights the importance of job gains and losses.

This article seeks to address the gap in knowledge about disconnected single mothers. The analysis is based on rich data from a large, longitudinal study of New Jersey welfare recipients who began receiving benefits in the late 1990s, and the data follow them through the early 2000s. The study begins by examining the incidence of disconnectedness, the economic hardship experienced by the disconnected, the manner in which disconnected single mothers support themselves, and the characteristics of those mothers. The study expands upon the existing literature by analyzing data from a 5-year panel that is much longer than the longitudinal panels typically available in other sources on low-income populations. These data also provide an unusually rich set of variables that allow for investigation of the role that different factors play in the dynamics of disconnectedness. The data include detailed employment histories and information on human capital, health, and demographic characteristics. These variables are crucial given earlier findings on the importance of employment and employment barriers for disconnected women (Turner et al. 2006; Blank and Kovak 2009). The data also include administrative records on the receipt of a full-family TANF sanction for noncompliance with TANF work requirements. Existing research suggests that imposed welfare sanctions are negatively associated with employment

outcomes (Lee, Slack, and Lewis 2004); therefore, sanction receipt may be related to the dynamics of disconnected status. Finally, the data include information on state monthly unemployment rates. This is important since local labor market conditions play a role in both employment and welfare dynamics (Hoynes 2000; Herbst and Stevens 2010).

Multivariate hazard models allow the authors to identify how different factors are associated with transitions into and out of disconnected status. Further, the analyses investigate whether different factors are important for different types of transitions out of disconnected status. The data have some limitations, in that they do not cover the recent recessionary period and they do not allow for examination of disconnected spells at short (monthly) intervals.

Welfare in New Jersey

New Jersey's welfare program is typical in many respects of those in several other states. In accordance with federal law, New Jersey requires most recipients to participate in a work activity as a condition for benefit receipt. Similar to many other states, New Jersey enforces this work requirement through benefit reductions for noncompliance, and enforcement gradually progresses toward a full-family sanction, under which the cash grant is eliminated entirely. The state's cash benefit levels are close to the median for the nation. As do many other states, New Jersey permits TANF participants to receive cash benefits for up to 5 years, the maximum length of time allowed under federal law. The state also offers temporary extensions for the relatively small number of TANF participants who reach the 5-year limit, so that very few families have their benefits terminated for this reason. In the national context, many of New Jersey's welfare policies can be characterized as middle of the road. In terms of time limits, work requirements, sanctioning policy, and benefit amounts, New Jersey's policies tend to be neither unusually stringent nor unusually generous. For this reason, the economic experiences of the state's welfare recipients should provide informative insights for the national policy debate.[2]

In other respects, New Jersey is less typical of the nation as a whole. In particular, it is an affluent state: the median income is well above the national level, and the poverty rate is among the lowest in the nation (US Census Bureau 2008). Therefore, it may be best to view the dynamics of disconnectedness of the state's former TANF recipients as a best-case scenario of the likely experience of TANF recipients in other, less affluent regions of the country.

2. Wood, Rangarajan, and Gordon (2004) provide additional details about New Jersey's TANF system.

Data and Sample

This article examines the experiences of a cohort of 2,000 New Jersey welfare recipients who entered the TANF program during its first 18 months of implementation in the state (from July 1997 to December 1998). The analysis relies on data collected as part of a comprehensive evaluation of the state's TANF program. Mathematica Policy Research conducted the evaluation for the New Jersey Department of Human Services.[3]

Five annual surveys were conducted with the study sample from 1999 through 2003. In each of the five survey rounds, 80 percent of the full sample completed interviews; 95 percent of sample members completed at least one of the five follow-up surveys; 57 percent of sample members completed all five follow-up surveys. Surveys were conducted at approximately 1-year intervals. Respectively, the first through fifth surveys were conducted, on average, 19, 30, 42, 54, and 66 months after sample members entered the TANF program. Surveys were attempted at each of these points for all sample members, regardless of whether they responded to previous surveys. These five annual surveys provide detailed information on the job characteristics, employment histories, and income sources of respondents. They are the primary data source for this article.

As table 1 suggests, the sample of female welfare recipients in New Jersey is diverse.[4] Some face substantial barriers to self-sufficiency; others are less disadvantaged and face fewer obstacles. Four in 10 report that they lack a high school diploma or General Educational Development (GED) certificate. Although many report working within the 2 years prior to TANF program entry, over 40 percent report that they had no work experience during that period. About half of the sample members are African American, and more than one in four is Hispanic. On average, sample members' households include two children at the point of TANF entry, and the youngest is less than 5 years old. In addition, 15 percent report that they speak a language other than English at home, and 6 percent are not US citizens.

3. Please see Wood et al. (2004), which provides additional information about the sample used for the analysis presented in this article. The evaluation sample includes two main groups: (1) the caseload sample and (2) the new entrants sample. The caseload sample represents those who entered TANF from the ongoing AFDC caseload when TANF was implemented in New Jersey in July 1997. The new entrants sample represents those who were not part of the AFDC caseload when TANF was implemented but who subsequently entered the program during its first year and a half. These two groups are combined for the analysis. Child-only TANF cases, which contain no adults and are thus not subject to work requirements and time limits, are excluded from the sample. To ensure adequate sample sizes for key subgroup analyses, recipients from the new entrants group and those from smaller counties were oversampled. All figures in this article are weighted so that they represent the full statewide population of TANF recipients who entered the program between July 1997 and December 1998.

4. The analysis sample used in this article includes only female welfare recipients, who represent about 95 percent of the sample available in the evaluation data.

Table 1

BASELINE CHARACTERISTICS OF SAMPLE, BY DISCONNECTED STATUS

		Disconnected Status		
	Overall	Never	At Least One Period	At Least Two Periods
Human capital variables:				
Educational attainment:				
At least high school diploma or GED	.61	.66	.55***	.49***
More than high school diploma	.16	.17	.14+	.12**
Not employed during 2 years before TANF entry	.43	.33	.48***	.51***
TANF-related variables:				
Months of TANF receipt in 2 years before TANF entry	14.7	14.2	15.1+	16.2***
Received welfare growing up	.39	.38	.40	.35
Demographic variables:				
Age	30.0	30.2	29.6	29.9
Race or ethnicity:				
African American	.50	.49	.52	.54
Hispanic	.26	.26	.26	.24
White or other	.24	.25	.22	.21
Married	.04	.05	.03**	.03**
No. of children in household	1.96	2.0	1.9+	1.8**
Age of youngest child	4.56	4.6	4.5	4.8
Lived in two-parent household as a child	.51	.52	.48	.46
US citizen	.94	.93	.94	.95
Speaks English at home	.85	.85	.85	.86
Area characteristics:				
High-poverty zip code	.38	.38	.39	.35
Low population density county	.20	.21	.20	.37
Sample size	1,441	811	630	261

SOURCE.—Work First New Jersey program (WFNJ) administrative records data and WFNJ client surveys, conducted by Mathematica Policy Research.

NOTE.—High-poverty zip codes are defined as having poverty levels of 20% or more. Low population density counties are defined as having less than 1,000 people per square mile. GED = General Educational Development certificate; TANF = Temporary Assistance for Needy Families program.

+ $p < .05$.

** $p < .01$.

*** $p < .001$.

New Jersey's TANF caseload is more urban than the national caseload. This reflects the state's diverse population and high population density. Many sample members live in the poorest and most urban parts of the state. Half live in New Jersey's three most densely populated and urbanized counties: Camden, Essex, and Hudson. In addition, nearly four in 10 live in a high-poverty area, which is defined as a five-digit zip-code area in which more than 20 percent of the residents have incomes below the poverty threshold.[5]

5. County population density and zip code poverty rates are available in the evaluation data used in this analysis and are based on information from the 2000 US Census.

Definition of Disconnected

Although few studies examine issues related to disconnected single mothers, there is variation in the definition of disconnected status. Some studies use a primary definition that identifies disconnectedness as lack of employment at the time of the survey (Blank and Kovak 2009). Others employ definitions that require extended periods with no work (Loprest 2003; Turner et al. 2006). Some studies exclude those receiving TANF or SSI (Loprest 2003; Blank and Kovak 2009); others also exclude those receiving unemployment insurance (UI; Turner et al. 2006). The definition used in some studies does not consider the employment status of other adults in the participant's household (Blank and Kovak 2009); other definitions exclude those with employed spouses or partners (Loprest 2003; Turner et al. 2006).

Throughout the analysis, sample members are considered to be disconnected at the time of a survey if they report that they are not employed; not receiving TANF, SSI, or UI benefits; not living with an employed spouse or partner; and not incarcerated. This definition is intended to focus the analysis on those who are not receiving income from sources that are typically regarded as having the potential to meet a family's needs. Although those who receive benefits from Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP; formerly the Food Stamp Program) or other small government benefits are connected in the sense that they receive social insurance income for which they qualify, this study includes recipients of these programs as disconnected because the benefits of those programs alone are unlikely to meet a family's needs.

Because this study's definition of disconnectedness is fairly restrictive, the analyses also examine the prevalence of other means of support overall and among those who leave disconnected status. This final category, other support, includes support received from SSI, UI, living with an employed spouse or partner, or incarceration. Incarceration, which is experienced by less than 2 percent of the sample during the follow-up period, is clearly not a means of support in the same sense as SSI, UI, or spousal support, but it is included in this category for accounting purposes and is examined separately where appropriate.

The measure of disconnected status can only be constructed for the time of the annual follow-up surveys; one cannot construct a monthly measure because monthly timelines are not available for SSI receipt and spouse or partner employment. Therefore, the study is not able to examine dynamics of disconnectedness in intervals smaller than the period between follow-up surveys, typically a period of 1 year.

Methods

In order to investigate factors associated with the dynamics of disconnectedness, the authors estimate a series of discrete time hazard models.[6] Separate estimates model transitions into disconnected status, transitions out of disconnected status, and transitions from disconnected status into specific means of support (such as employment). The unit of observation for this analysis is the person-year. The analysis sample for each model includes all person-years for which a relevant spell is in progress. These include person-years that are a part of repeat spells and spells censored by the end of the survey period or survey nonresponse.[7] The dependent variable indicates whether a transition to the status of interest occurs at the end of the period. For example, in investigation of transitions out of disconnected status, this variable takes a value of zero if a spell of disconnectedness is in progress at survey $t-1$ and remains in progress at survey t; it takes a value of one if a spell of disconnectedness is in progress at survey $t-1$ and ends at survey t.

The model of transitions into disconnected status takes the following form:

$$h(t) = \frac{1}{1 - \exp(\beta_1 \text{Support} + \beta_2 \text{HK} + \beta_3 \text{Sanc} + \beta_4 \text{Demog} + \beta_5 \text{Hlth} + \beta_6 \text{Unemp} + \beta_7 \text{Time})},$$

where $h(t)$ corresponds to the hazard rate, or probability of transitioning to disconnected status during year t of the spell, given that the sample member did not transition to disconnected status during year $t-1$. All covariates included in the model are measured at time $t-1$. The vector Support represents a set of variables corresponding to whether the person reports having different means of support at the beginning of the period. The variables capture whether the person reports that she was employed and not receiving TANF, as well as whether she reports receiving support other than TANF or employment (receiving TANF is the omitted category). A vector of human capital characteristics, HK, includes educational attainment (whether the respondent reports that she has a high school diploma [or GED] or education beyond high school; the omitted category is composed of respondents who lack a high school diploma or GED) and pre-panel work experience (the number of quarters for which a respondent reports employment in the 2 years before entering TANF). The term Sanc represents whether administrative records indicate that a full-family TANF sanction for noncompliance with TANF work require-

6. This approach is used elsewhere in the literature that examines issues related to dynamics among welfare populations. See, e.g., Johnson and Corcoran (2003), Nam (2005), and Wood et al. (2008).

7. Results are similar if the sample is limited to initial spells only.

ments was in place at the beginning of year t of the spell. A vector of demographic characteristics, Demog, is measured at the beginning of the period. It includes sample members' reports concerning race or ethnicity (non-Hispanic African American and Hispanic; all others comprise the omitted category), the number of children in the household, the age of the youngest child, whether the respondent lived in a two-parent household as a child, whether she received welfare growing up, whether she is a US citizen, and whether she speaks English at home. The term Hlth includes several measures of health status. Data for these are captured at the beginning of year t of the spell and refer to events in the year prior. The measures include whether the person experienced a limiting health condition, whether she reports being in poor or fair health, and whether she reports that she was seriously ill or disabled. The term Unemp represents the monthly state unemployment rate at the beginning of year t.[8] Finally, Time includes a set of dummy variables that correspond to the number of years the spell had been in progress.

Models of transitions out of disconnected status have the same form shown in the equation above but do not include variables related to means of support (represented by Support in the equation above) because, by definition, disconnected single mothers are not employed; not receiving TANF, SSI, or UI benefits; not living with an employed spouse or partner; and not incarcerated.

The models estimated in this article do not seek to control for unobserved heterogeneity, such as that related to motivation, education quality, or other unobserved human capital attributes. As such, the coefficients should not be interpreted as causal effects. Rather, they summarize the relationship among transitions into disconnected status and various human capital, demographic, and other factors.

Prevalence of Disconnectedness

Throughout the follow-up period, a substantial minority of this cohort of TANF recipients is in disconnected status. The estimates in table 2 suggest that, at the time of the first follow-up survey (conducted, on average, about 19 months after TANF entry), 19 percent of sample members are disconnected. At later follow-ups (conducted at annual intervals from 2.5 to 5.5 years after TANF entry), the estimated pro-

8. Monthly state unemployment rates were obtained from the New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development (2004, 2008*a*, 2008*b*, 2008*c*). The variation in these rates comes from having multiple follow-up surveys, each of which was completed in different calendar months for different sample members.

Table 2

Means of Support among Former Welfare Participants over Time

	Survey							
	1	2	3	4	5	Any	Any Two Surveys	Any Three Surveys
Disconnected	18.5	14.8	14.3	13.9	15.0	43.9	18.6	7.4
Employed, no TANF	33.0	41.0	47.1	50.4	49.7	73.4	57.4	43.1
TANF	40.2	34.3	25.7	22.1	20.9	59.2	38.6	21.7
Other support	8.3	9.8	13.0	13.6	14.4	32.7	12.8	6.5

Source.—Work First New Jersey program (WFNJ) administrative records data and WFNJ client surveys, conducted by Mathematica Policy Research.

Note.—TANF = Temporary Assistance for Needy Families program. Other support includes those receiving benefits from the Supplemental Security Income program, unemployment insurance benefits, living with an employed spouse or partner, or incarcerated.

portion of disconnected sample members is somewhat lower and remains at a relatively constant level: 14–15 percent.[9]

A large portion of this group of TANF recipients is found to experience disconnectedness at some point; 44 percent are disconnected at the time of at least one follow-up survey (table 2). However, being disconnected at multiple surveys is substantially less common; 19 percent of sample members are disconnected at the time of two or more surveys, and 7 percent are disconnected at the time of three or more surveys.

Compared with those who do not become disconnected, sample members who become disconnected during the analysis period have substantially less education and are less likely to report employment in the 2 years prior to TANF entry (table 1). At baseline, about two-thirds of those who were not disconnected at any follow-up survey report having a high school diploma or GED, and only one-third report having no employment history in the 2 years before TANF entry. By comparison, 55 percent of those identified as disconnected in at least one follow-up survey reported having a high school degree at baseline, and about half reported having no employment history in the 2 years before TANF entry. Members who are disconnected in at least one period also report that they spend statistically significantly more time receiving welfare before entering the sample than do those who are not identified as disconnected. The human capital and TANF history characteristics of those who were disconnected for at least two follow-up periods are even more disfavorable.

Despite the differences in human capital and TANF history charac-

9. This finding does not appear to be the result of differential sample attrition for disconnected women. For example, the response rate to the second follow-up survey was 95 percent both for respondents to the first follow-up survey who were identified as disconnected in the first follow-up survey and for those who were not identified as such. Response rates remained similar for both groups for subsequent follow-up surveys.

Table 3

Income of Employed, TANF Receiving, or Disconnected Former Welfare Participants (Dollars)

	All	By Means of Support			
		Disconnected	Employed, No TANF	TANF	Other Support
Income:					
Earnings	737	72	1,475	241	33
TANF	97	0	0	340	0
SNAP	128	114	60	264	73
SSI	94	77	55	113	217
UI	33	5	20	6	186
Earnings of spouse or partner	207	17	262	31	672
Child support	57	87	71	18	54
Transfer from friends or relatives	27	52	22	21	25
Other sources	88	63	95	90	86
Total	1,468	487	2,061	1,125	1,347
No. of observations	6,869	1,034	3,113	1,873	849
No. of individuals	1,441	630	1,078	835	481

Source.—Work First New Jersey program (WFNJ) administrative records data and WFNJ client surveys, conducted by Mathematica Policy Research.

Note.—TANF = Temporary Assistance for Needy Families program; SNAP = Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (formerly the Food Stamp Program); SSI = Supplemental Security Income program; UI = unemployment insurance. Other support includes those receiving SSI, receiving UI benefits, living with an employed spouse or partner, or incarcerated. Income is reported in year 2003 dollars. Income from SSI includes benefits received by the sample member and from other family members. By definition, disconnected single mothers do not receive SSI benefits of their own; however, their families may receive disability benefits through other family members.

teristics, sample members identified as disconnected during the analysis period have demographic characteristics that are similar to those of members not identified as disconnected. As table 1 suggests, those identified as disconnected are less likely to be married at baseline, but these groups are similar in terms of average age, racial and ethnic composition, typical household composition, and other characteristics.

Those in disconnected status get by on very little income. Their average income while disconnected is less than $500 per month (table 3). In comparison, the average monthly income of former TANF recipients while they are employed is more than $2,000 per month. As table 3 suggests, the modest incomes of disconnected members come primarily from SNAP, child support, and SSI benefits received by other family members. These estimates also suggest that disconnected leavers often rely on help from friends and relatives as well as from other sources, such as other public assistance, child-care assistance, or unspecified sources.

In addition to having low income levels, disconnected women experience substantial hardship during the time they are disconnected. About 7 percent

Table 4

HOUSING AND ECONOMIC HARDSHIP OF EMPLOYED, TANF RECEIVING, OR DISCONNECTED FORMER WELFARE PARTICIPANTS

		By Means of Support			
	All	Disconnected	Employed, No TANF	TANF	Other Support
Housing at the time of the survey:					
Public or subsidized	32.9	33.7	29.9	41.4	22.9
With friend or relative, not paying rent	7.1	17.0	5.0	6.2	4.8
Hardships experienced in the past year:					
Serious illness	21.4	21.6	12.6	32.4	31.9
Homeless or living in a shelter	4.5	7.4	2.2	7.8	3.3
Electric or water services cut	7.8	9.0	6.0	9.6	9.2
Used food bank or soup kitchen	11.7	15.4	7.4	16.6	13.4
Not enough to eat during past 3 months	14.8	20.9	10.4	17.0	19.2
No. of observations	6,869	1,034	3,113	1,873	849
No. of individuals	1,441	630	1,078	835	481

SOURCE.—Work First New Jersey program (WFNJ) client surveys, conducted by Mathematica Policy Research.

NOTE.—Measures of hardships experienced during the past year were not collected on the first follow-up survey. Therefore, the number of observations for which these variables are defined is lower than the numbers shown in the table. Not enough to eat corresponds to whether the respondent indicated not having enough to eat often or sometimes during the three months prior to the survey.

report having been homeless or living in a shelter during the year prior to the survey, and 21 percent report often or sometimes not having enough to eat during the 3 months prior to the survey (table 4).

Many disconnected women also rely on help from friends and relatives to make ends meet. About half of disconnected sample members live with another adult, usually a grown child, parent, or sibling (not shown). In addition, 17 percent of disconnected women live with friends or relatives while paying no rent during the time they are disconnected; this is the case for only 5 percent of employed former TANF recipients during the time they are employed (table 4). Estimates indicate that disconnected TANF leavers also rely on community and government supports. About 15 percent report using a food bank or soup kitchen in the year prior to survey; one-third report receiving a government housing subsidy during that period (table 4).

Transitions into and out of Disconnectedness

The economic circumstances of current and former TANF recipients change frequently; the percentages employed, on TANF, or discon-

Table 5

Transitions across Successive Surveys between Different Means of Support

At Survey t	Survey $t + 1$ Year			
	Disconnected	Employed, No TANF	TANF Recipient	Other Support
Disconnected	34	28	27	11
Employed, no TANF	7	77	8	8
TANF recipient	13	24	56	6
Other support	16	27	10	47

Source.—Work First New Jersey program (WFNJ) administrative records data and WFNJ client surveys, conducted by Mathematica Policy Research.

Note.—t = time of survey; TANF = Temporary Assistance for Needy Families. Other support includes those receiving benefits from the Supplemental Security Income program, receiving unemployment insurance benefits, living with an employed spouse or partner, or incarcerated.

nected do not represent the same individuals from year to year. Moreover, certain economic circumstances are more stable than others. For example, about three-quarters of those who report being employed and off TANF at a given survey report a similar circumstance 1 year later (table 5). Similarly, more than half of those who indicate that they receive TANF at a given survey are still receiving TANF a year later. Given the dire economic circumstances of the disconnected, it is not surprising that being disconnected is a particularly transient economic circumstance. Only a third of those in the disconnected status are still identified as such at the following survey (table 5). The estimates suggest that, throughout the full 5.5-year follow-up period, those leaving disconnected status are equally likely to exit by getting a job as they are to exit by returning to TANF (table 5). However, these probabilities are estimated to vary somewhat over the follow-up period. Early in the period, transitions back to TANF are more common than transitions back to employment (not shown). Later in the period, the most common transition out of disconnected status is to employment.

Factors Associated with Transitions into Disconnected Status

The summary statistics discussed above suggest that many former TANF recipients spend some time in disconnected status in the years immediately after TANF exit and face substantial risk of serious economic hardship during these periods. It is likely that the risk of becoming disconnected is greater for some groups of former TANF recipients than for others. As discussed above, a hazard model allows for investigation of this possibility by modeling the relationships of transition into disconnected status with a broad set of factors.

Results from the estimation of this model are presented in the first

column of table 6. The table's second column reports the estimated, average, 1-year change in the probability of transitioning into disconnected status that is associated with a unit change in each explanatory variable. Due to the nonlinearity of the model, these marginal effects are easier to interpret than coefficient estimates. Marginal effects are calculated by evaluating the differences in the mean hazard rate that result from changing the explanatory variable of interest in a given way while holding all other variables constant. Findings presented in table 6 suggest that means of support, TANF full-family sanction receipt, human capital characteristics, marital status, and monthly unemployment rate are all important factors related to transitions into disconnected status.

Means of Support

Consistent with the descriptive results presented in table 5, the estimates in table 6 suggest that those who are employed are substantially less likely to enter disconnected status than are those who still receive TANF or those who rely primarily on other sources of financial support. Those who are employed and not receiving TANF are 2 percentage points less likely to become disconnected than those who are receiving TANF (the overall mean hazard is 8.5 percent). Those who are not disconnected but who do not have support from employment or TANF (i.e., who have other support) are estimated to be more than twice as likely as TANF recipients to become disconnected; the estimated increase in hazard rate associated with these alternative means of support is 10 percentage points.

Because the results suggest that those who are not employed or on TANF are the least economically stable and most likely to become disconnected, it is of interest to investigate whether types of support other than employment or TANF are highly associated with transitions to disconnected status. Therefore, those who are not identified as disconnected, employed, or receiving TANF are categorized as receiving support from any of five other sources: SSI, UI, an employed spouse, an employed partner, or incarceration. The model is then reestimated. These five categories are not mutually exclusive; however, they are only assigned a value of one for those who report that they neither receive TANF nor are employed. Thus, those who are both employed and have an employed spouse are grouped with others who are employed.

The hazard model is reestimated using these five categories. Results from this specification are presented in the third and fourth columns of table 6. Those results are consistent with the stable nature of SSI receipt, in that those receiving SSI are estimated to be the least likely to become disconnected among the five types of support other than employment and TANF, and SSI recipients are not statistically signifi-

cantly more likely to become disconnected than are those receiving TANF. However, individuals who rely on UI, those who receive support from an employed spouse or partner, and those who are incarcerated are estimated to be more likely to experience a transition into disconnected status than are employed sample members or those receiving TANF. Comprising about 5 percent of the sample at any given follow-up, former TANF recipients receiving UI are estimated to be particularly likely to become disconnected. The estimated marginal effect of UI receipt on the probability of transitioning to disconnected status is 12 percentage points; thus, relying on UI receipt (rather than on TANF or employment) more than doubles the risk of becoming disconnected. This is consistent with the fact that UI eligibility typically expires after 26 weeks and suggests that low-income single mothers who rely on UI are particularly vulnerable to becoming disconnected when benefits expire.[10]

Sample members relying on an employed spouse or an employed cohabiting partner as the primary means of financial support are also estimated to be at relatively high risk of entering disconnected status. These two groups do not include sample members who have an employed spouse or partner but are also employed themselves or receiving TANF. About 29 percent of married, nondisconnected sample members rely on an employed spouse as the primary means of support; 33 percent of unmarried, cohabiting, nondisconnected sample members rely on an employed partner. The hazard results suggest that both of these groups are about 7 percentage points more likely to enter disconnected status in the following time period than are sample members who are single and supported by their own earnings.[11] A low-income mother relying on an employed partner for financial support may be particularly vulnerable to entering disconnected status, because she faces both the risk that her partner may lose his job and the risk that her relationship with her partner may end. Previous research on this sample shows that rates of marital breakup among former TANF recipients are more than double national rates, suggesting that the risk of becoming disconnected

10. The maximum UI eligibility duration is 26 weeks under normal economic circumstances. However, eligibility duration depends in most states on the amount of time spent working during a base period. Thus, eligibility duration can be less than 26 weeks for those who cycle in and out of employment (Rangarajan and Razafindrakoto 2004). Benefits from UI can be extended an additional 13 weeks in states with high unemployment rates; however, New Jersey was not such a state during the period covered by these data.

11. The marginal effect for the group relying on an employed spouse is based on the sum of the marginal effects on being married and relying on an employed spouse ($-.060 + .106 = .046$). This marginal effect is estimated to be .071 higher than the marginal effect of being single and employed ($-.027$). The coefficient on being employed is statistically significantly different from the sum of the coefficients on being married and relying on an employed spouse at the 5 percent level. The comparison of those relying on an employed partner to those relying on own employment is analogous.

Table 6

CHANGE IN HAZARD RATE OF TRANSITIONING TO DISCONNECTED STATUS

			DISAGGREGATING OTHER SUPPORT	
	COEFFICIENT	CHANGE[a]	Coefficient	Change[a]
Overall		.085		.085
Means of support:				
Employed, no TANF	−.27+	−.021	−.35*	−.027
	(.16)		(.15)	
Other support	.97**	.102		
	(.19)			
SSI			.50	.047
			(.38)	
UI			1.05***	.123
			(.28)	
Employed spouse			.95*	.106
			(.41)	
Employed cohabiting partner			.67+	.068
			(.39)	
Incarcerated			2.96*	.556
			(1.19)	
TANF-related variables:				
Full sanction	1.40***	.181	1.33***	.166
	(.21)		(.19)	
Human capital variables:				
Educational attainment:				
High school diploma or GED	−.11	−.009	−.10	−.008
	(.13)		(.13)	
More than high school diploma	−.36+	−.025	−.37+	−.026
	(.19)		(.19)	
No. of quarters employed in 2 years before TANF entry	−.05+	−.004	−.05+	−.004
	(.03)		(.03)	
Health status:				
Limiting health condition	−.16	−.012	−.12	−.009
	(.19)		(.20)	
In poor or fair health	−.01	−.001	.00	.000
	(.16)		(.16)	
Seriously ill or disabled in past year	−.22	−.016	−.23	−.017
	(.18)		(.18)	
Demographic variables:				
Marital status:				
Married	−1.00***	−.059	−1.04***	−.060
	(.22)		(.27)	
Unmarried and cohabiting	−.43*	−.029	−.33	−.023
	(.22)		(.26)	
Race or ethnicity:				
African American	−.02	−.001	−.04	−.004
	(.16)		(.16)	
Hispanic	.01	.001	.02	.002
	(.19)		(.19)	
No. of children younger than 18 in household	−.15*	−.012	−.16*	−.012
	(.06)		(.06)	
Age of youngest child	.00	.000	.00	.000
	(.01)		(.01)	
Lived in two-parent household as a child	−.13	−.010	−.14	−.011
	(.12)		(.13)	

Table 6 (*Continued*)

			Disaggregating Other Support	
	Coefficient	Change[a]	Coefficient	Change[a]
Received welfare growing up	−.02	−.002	−.04	−.003
	(.13)		(.12)	
US citizen	.01	.001	.03	.003
	(.30)		(.30)	
Speaks English at home	−.05	−.004	−.08	−.006
	(.23)		(.23)	
Economic conditions:				
Unemployment rate	.19*	.015	.19*	.015
	(.09)		(.09)	
No. of spells	1,614		1,614	
No. of individuals	1,407		1,407	

Source.—Work First New Jersey program (WFNJ) administrative records data and WFNJ client surveys, conducted by Mathematica Policy Research.

Note.—TANF = Temporary Assistance for Needy Families program; SSI = Supplemental Security Income program; UI = unemployment insurance; GED = General Educational Development certificate. Other support includes those receiving SSI, receiving UI benefits, living with an employed spouse or partner, or incarcerated. Standard errors are reported in parentheses.

[a] Change in hazard from unit change in X; estimated average 1-year change in the probability of transitioning into disconnected status that is associated with a unit change in each explanatory variable.

$^{+}$ $p < .10$.
* $p < .05$.
** $p < .01$.
*** $p < .001$.

due to a breakup may be particularly substantial (Wood, Rangarajan, and Deke 2003).

Incarcerated sample members (only about 2 percent of the sample during the follow-up period) are highly likely to become disconnected in the next period; the estimated increase in the hazard rate associated with incarceration is 56 percentage points. This result suggests that single mothers leaving prison are at extremely high risk of entering disconnected status.

Sanction Receipt

Among the factors most strongly associated with falling into disconnected status is receipt of a full-family TANF sanction, under which benefits cease and the welfare case is closed for noncompliance with TANF's work requirements. The estimated increase in the hazard rate associated with receipt of a full sanction is 18 percentage points and is statistically significant at the .001 level (table 6). If other factors are held constant, receipt of a full sanction is estimated to triple the risk of becoming disconnected. This finding suggests that many TANF recipients whose welfare cases are closed for noncompliance with TANF work requirements face substantial difficulty in obtaining alternate

means of support, and it is consistent with other research in suggesting that TANF sanctions are associated with economic hardship (Kalil, Seefeldt, and Wang 2002; Pavetti et al. 2004; Reichman, Teitler, and Curtis 2005).

Human Capital, Health, and Demographic Characteristics

As results in table 6 suggest, those with more education and work experience are estimated to be at lower risk of experiencing disconnected status. In particular, if other factors are held constant, those who have more than a high school degree are 2.5 percentage points less likely to become disconnected in a given year than are those with less education. The coefficient on pre-TANF work experience, which is measured as the number of quarters of employment in the 2 years prior to TANF entry, is also negative and statistically significant. The estimated marginal effect implies that an additional year of recent experience translates to a 1.6 percentage-point decrease in the probability of becoming disconnected.[12]

The results also suggest that married sample members are substantially less likely than unmarried counterparts to become disconnected, and the hazard rate for married people is estimated to decrease by 6 percentage points. All sample members entered TANF unmarried, and about 15 percent married at some point during the follow-up period. The results suggest that this relatively small group of TANF recipients is unlikely to enter disconnected status. Cohabiting is also estimated to be associated with a reduction in the likelihood of becoming disconnected, although the reduction is smaller than that associated with being married. These results illustrate the safety net that a spouse or partner's income can provide. For example, if an employed sample member loses her job, she may be able to rely on income from her spouse or partner in the next period and thus may avoid falling into disconnected status.

Other than marital status, the only demographic characteristic statistically significantly associated with transitions into disconnectedness is the number of children in the household. An additional child (evaluated at the mean) is associated with a 1.2 percentage point decrease in the hazard rate of becoming disconnected.

Unemployment Rate

The monthly state unemployment rate is estimated to have a large, statistically significant, and positive association with becoming disconnected. The association suggests that individuals are more likely to become dis-

12. The marginal effect for an additional year of pre-TANF work experience is obtained by multiplying the marginal effect for an additional quarter of experience by 4 ($-.004 \times 4 = -.016$).

connected in weaker labor markets. In table 6, the marginal effect estimate for the monthly unemployment rate suggests that a 1 percentage-point increase in the unemployment rate increases the risk of becoming disconnected by 1.5 percentage points. This finding has implications for the flow of families into disconnected status during the recent economic downturn. For example, the average state unemployment rate during this study's sampling period was 4.9 percent, but New Jersey's unemployment rate in November 2011 was 9.2 percent (New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development 2012).[13] The estimated marginal effects imply that this change in unemployment to the 2011 level would increase the risk of becoming disconnected by 6.5 percentage points, an increase of 76 percent over the study's average rate of disconnectedness. An illustration may place these figures into context; if an unemployment rate of 9.2 percent were sustained over a 3-year period, the estimates imply that 39 percent of this population would become disconnected at some point during the 3 years. In comparison, 23 percent would become disconnected if the unemployment rate were 4.9 percent (the prevailing rate during the sample period).

Factors Related to Transitions out of Disconnected Status

In addition to transitions into disconnected status, the study examines factors related to transitioning from disconnected status to another means of support. To do so, it uses a discrete-time multivariate hazard framework that is analogous to the one employed in the previous section. Results from this analysis are presented in the first two columns of table 7; no factor is estimated to have a statistically significant relationship with exits from disconnected status to any of the more stable means of support. One possible explanation for this finding is that different sets of factors are associated with different types of exits from disconnectedness, such as exits to employment or exits to TANF receipt. By aggregating transitions from disconnected status to employment, TANF receipt, and other types of support, the analysis may obscure these underlying relationships.

To explore this possibility, the authors estimate separate hazard models for each type of transition from disconnected status. Results from this competing risks analysis, presented in columns 3–8 of table 7, show that different factors are associated with different types of transitions. In particular, education and work experience are estimated to be associated with transitions from disconnected status to employment. In contrast, demographic characteristics and health status are important

13. During the sample period, the monthly state unemployment rate in New Jersey ranged from 3.7 to 6.0 percent (New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development 2012). The period covers the economic expansion of the late 1990s and the economic downturn in the early 2000s.

Table 7

CHANGE IN HAZARD RATE OF TRANSITIONING FROM DISCONNECTED STATUS TO ANOTHER MEANS OF SUPPORT

	FROM DISCONNECTED STATUS TO:							
	Employment, TANF, or Other Support		Employment		TANF		Other Support	
	Coef.	Change[a]	Coef.	Change[a]	Coef.	Change[a]	Coef.	Change[a]
Overall		.605		.270		.240		.095
Human capital variables:								
Educational attainment:								
High school diploma or GED	.04	.008	.44*	.087	−.19	−.034	−.46	−.039
	(.20)		(.22)		(.23)		(.33)	
More than high school diploma	.14	.029	.00	.000	.21	.039	−.05	.004
	(.32)		(.31)		(.36)		(.49)	
No. of quarters employed in 2 years before TANF entry	.03	.007	.15***	.029	−.07	−.012	−.16*	−.014
	(.04)		(.04)		(.04)		(.08)	
Health status:								
Limiting health condition	.12	.026	.05	.010	.04	.008	.08	.007
	(.27)		(.27)		(.27)		(.40)	
In poor or fair health	−.04	−.008	−.44	−.083	.39	.074	.01	.001
	(.25)		(.28)		(.25)		(.36)	
Seriously ill or disabled in past year	−.21	−.047	−.45	−.083	−.08	−.014	.51	.050
	(.27)		(.28)		(.27)		(.34)	
Demographic variables:								
Marital status:								
Married	−.45	−.105	−.32	−.058	−.84+	−.124	.63	.068
	(.38)		(.42)		(.51)		(.44)	
Cohabiting	−.67	−.015	.32	.068	−.25	−.043	−.31	−.023
	(.55)		(.48)		(.66)		(.78)	

Race or ethnicity:								
African American	.10	.021	−.34	−.067	1.02***	.184	−.66+	−.058
	(.24)		(.25)		(.30)		(.36)	
Hispanic	.13	.003	−.45	−.085	.75*	.147	−.15	−.012
	(.31)		(.30)		(.37)		(.39)	
No. of children younger than 18 in household	−.72	−.016	−.12	−.025	.08	.015	−.08	−.007
	(.90)		(.10)		(.09)		(.10)	
Age of youngest child	−.03	−.006	.01	.002	−.03	−.006	−.03	−.003
	(.02)		(.02)		(.02)		(.04)	
Lived in two-parent household as a child	.30	.065	.19	.038	.02	.004	.27	.023
	(.20)		(.21)		(.23)		(.28)	
Received welfare growing up	.10	.023	−.01	−.001	.45+	.084	−.67*	−.055
	(.20)		(.21)		(.23)		(.32)	
US citizen	.26	.060	−.05	−.009	.48	.078	−.16	−.014
	(.43)		(.46)		(.52)		(.56)	
Speaks English at home	−.39	−.082	−.50	−.105	−.17	−.032	.37	.029
	(.39)		(.36)		(.41)		(.50)	
Economic conditions:								
Unemployment rate	.02	.005	.01	.001	−.09	−.016	.18	.016
	(.12)		(.12)		(.13)		(.17)	
No. of spells	607		607		607		607	
No. of individuals	541		541		541		541	

SOURCE.—Work First New Jersey program (WFNJ) administrative records data and WFNJ client surveys, conducted by Mathematica Policy Research.

NOTE.—TANF = Temporary Assistance for Needy Families program; Coef. = coefficient estimates; GED = General Educational Development certificate. Other support includes those receiving benefits from the Supplemental Security Income program, receiving unemployment insurance benefits, living with an employed spouse or partner, or incarcerated. Standard errors are reported in parentheses.

[a] Change in hazard from unit change in X; estimated average 1-year change in the probability of transitioning into disconnected status that is associated with a unit change in each explanatory variable.

+ $p < .10$.

* $p < .05$.

** $p < .01$.

*** $p < .001$.

for transitions from disconnectedness to TANF receipt. These results are discussed in more detail below.

Transitions to Employment

The results in table 7 underscore the importance of human capital and health status in the successful transition from disconnectedness to employment. In particular, those who have a high school degree are statistically significantly more likely to become employed than those who lack one. The estimated increase in hazard rate is 9 percentage points (the overall mean hazard rate is 27 percent). However, on the likelihood of leaving disconnected status for employment, the estimates identify no difference between high school dropouts and counterparts with more education than a high school degree.

Among the disconnected, those with more work experience (i.e., more quarters of employment in the 2 years before TANF entry) are substantially more likely to leave disconnected status for employment. An additional year of employment during the 2 years before TANF entry (evaluated at the mean) is estimated to increase the probability of exiting disconnected status for employment by 12 percentage points.[14] Thus, the results suggest that those who become disconnected and have more measured human capital are more likely to become employed.

Transitions to TANF Receipt

The factors associated with transitions from disconnectedness to TANF receipt are quite different from those associated with transitions from disconnectedness to employment. Although human capital characteristics are strongly associated with transitions from disconnected status to employment, demographic characteristics are strongly related to transitions to TANF receipt. Race seems to be particularly important; African Americans and Hispanics are estimated to be more likely than other sample members to exit disconnectedness by going back to TANF. The coefficient on transition to TANF is estimated to be statistically significant for African Americans and translates into an estimated 18 percentage-point increase in the probability of transitioning to TANF receipt. That for Hispanics is estimated to be statistically significant, and the marginal effect is 15 percentage points.

In addition to race, receipt of welfare while growing up is strongly associated with transitions to TANF receipt. Those who received welfare growing up are estimated to be 8 percentage points more likely than other members to transition from disconnectedness to TANF. Finally, the estimates suggest that married sample members are statistically sig-

14. This marginal effect is obtained by multiplying the effect of an additional quarter of employment during the 2 years before TANF entry by 4 (.029 × 4 = .116).

nificantly less likely than their single, noncohabiting counterparts to transition from disconnectedness to TANF receipt.

Transitions to Other Means of Support

The least-common transition out of disconnected status is to a means of support other than employment or TANF (the overall mean hazard rate is 10 percent). The types of support in this category are varied, and there are multiple pathways to these alternate means of support. In particular, a disconnected individual would have to become an SSI or UI recipient, acquire an employed spouse or partner, or become incarcerated in order to make this transition. Perhaps it is not surprising that few factors are found to be statistically significantly associated with this type of transition. Those who received welfare growing up are estimated to be less likely to transition from disconnectedness to other forms of support than are sample members who did not receive welfare in childhood. Perhaps this is because members who received welfare in childhood are more likely to transition to TANF receipt. Those with more work experience are also less likely to make this transition and instead are more likely to transition to employment. Finally, the estimates suggest that African Americans are less likely to make this transition than those who are neither African American nor Hispanic.

Conclusion

As has been documented elsewhere in the literature, the current analysis of transitions into and out of disconnectedness shows that spells of disconnectedness are common and associated with severe economic hardship. Over two-fifths of the sample is estimated to experience disconnectedness at some point during the follow-up period, and the average monthly income during a spell of disconnectedness is less than $500. However, these spells are relatively short-lived and typically last less than 1 year.

Given the extremely low incomes and tenuous economic circumstances of the disconnected, preventing spells of disconnectedness and helping the disconnected find stable means of support should be of particular concern to policy makers. The results point to several factors associated with transitions into and out of disconnectedness. These factors are relevant to potential policy prescriptions. Work history and human capital are found to be central to transitions into and out of disconnectedness. Employed members with stronger work histories and more education are statistically significantly less likely to become disconnected than other single mothers. Current employment is also estimated to be negatively associated with the likelihood of a transition into disconnectedness. Similarly, among the disconnected, those with

stronger work histories and more education are more likely to transition from disconnectedness to work. These findings emphasize the importance of employment and human capital for low-income populations.

The policy environment, particularly UI benefits and TANF sanctions, is found to be highly relevant to the dynamics of disconnectedness. Those in the sample who rely on UI benefits are estimated to be twice as vulnerable to disconnectedness as those relying on TANF or employment. This finding underscores the difficulties faced by single mothers whose UI benefits expire, and it has direct implications for the debate surrounding extension of UI benefit eligibility. Some policy observers argue against the extension of UI benefits, positing that extension gives UI recipients a disincentive to accept employment. This disincentive is shown in a number of studies that find longer periods of UI eligibility to be associated with longer unemployment spells (Katz and Meyer 1990; Card and Levine 2000). However, this analysis suggests that many single mothers who rely on UI benefits find it difficult to obtain employment when their benefits expire, and they face substantial hardship as a result. This suggests that, at least for some UI recipients, continued unemployment may indicate a legitimate difficulty in finding employment rather than a response to a disincentive to work created by these benefits.

In addition, receipt of a full sanction for noncompliance with TANF work requirements is found to triple the risk of becoming disconnected. This is important, because the Deficit Reduction Act of 2005 increased the stringency of federal welfare-to-work requirements; states responded by increasing the use and stringency of sanctions (Kauff et al. 2007). The current findings suggest that increases in states' use of TANF sanctions may prompt increases in the incidence of disconnectedness.

Finally, the hazard analysis presented here shows that transitions into disconnected status are very sensitive to economic conditions; such transitions are estimated to increase sharply with growth in the unemployment rate. Therefore, the results suggest that concerns about disconnectedness should be magnified in light of the recent and severe economic downturn.

Note

Quinn Moore is a senior researcher at Mathematica Policy Research. He is interested in problems related to family well-being, low-income employment, and social support programs, such as food assistance and welfare programs. **Robert G. Wood** is associate director of research at Mathematica Policy Research. His research focuses on welfare policy, the employment outcomes of low-income populations, dropout prevention strategies, and marriage and family formation issues. He served as principal investigator for the Work First New Jersey evaluation, from which the current research originated. **Anu Rangarajan** is a vice president of research at Mathematica Policy Research. In her more than 20 years of policy evaluation, she has conducted numerous studies of labor markets,

education, nutrition, welfare-to-work initiatives, development projects, and other poverty reduction programs. She served as project director for the Work First New Jersey evaluation.

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Veteran Status and Material Hardship: The Moderating Influence of Work-Limiting Disability

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Veterans are a sizable and policy-relevant demographic group in the United States, yet little is known about their economic well-being. Although having a work-limiting disability is known to be associated with material hardship, no known study compares material hardship between veteran households and nonveteran households or investigates whether work-limiting disability moderates the association between veteran status and material hardship. This study uses data from the Survey of Income and Program Participation to examine how household work-limiting disability status moderates the relationship between veteran status and the likelihood of material hardship. Results suggest the following: nondisabled-veteran households report lower or equivalent levels of material hardship than do households with no veteran or disabled member; regardless of whether a veteran is present, households that include a disabled person have higher levels of every type of hardship than other households do; and disabled-veteran households experience statistically significantly more hardship than nondisabled-veteran households do.

Little is known about the economic well-being of veteran households despite the fact that they constitute a sizable and policy-relevant demographic group in the United States (US Census Bureau 2009; Burland and Lundquist, forthcoming). This is surprising because emerging research documents that veteran status is associated with increases in rates

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of functional limitation and disability over the life course (Dobkin and Shabani 2009; MacLean 2010; Wilmoth, London, and Parker 2010, 2011). So too, having a work-limiting disability is positively associated with poverty and material hardship (Mayer and Jencks 1989; Fujiura, Yamaki, and Czechowicz 1998; She and Livermore 2007; Rose, Parish, and Yoo 2009). In fact, Bonnie O'Day and Marcie Goldstein's (2005) analysis identifies the effect of poverty among people with disabilities as an overarching theme in key informant interviews with disability advocacy and research leaders; however, none of the those key informants specifically mentions that addressing the needs of disabled veterans is a top priority.

Few studies of disability and economic hardship measure participants' veteran status. One recent study documents a large and negative association between disabled-veteran status and income, such that income is estimated to be statistically significantly lower for disabled veterans than for persons without disabilities and for nonveterans with disabilities (Fulton et al. 2009). Another recent study demonstrates that household-level veteran and work-limiting disability statuses are jointly associated with household poverty status (London, Heflin, and Wilmoth 2011).

Poverty and various material hardships are conceptually distinct and only modestly correlated (Mayer and Jencks 1989, 1993; Mayer 1995; Beverly 2001; Boushey et al. 2001; Bradshaw and Finch 2003; Heflin, Sandberg, and Rafail 2009). Researchers increasingly focus on the experience of material hardship net of household income (Iceland and Bauman 2004; She and Livermore 2007; Heflin and Iceland 2009), but the authors are aware of no study that focuses on experiences of material hardship among veteran and comparable nonveteran households. Nor does any known study consider whether the presence of a household member with a work-limiting disability moderates the risk for material hardship in veteran households. This is a surprising omission in the literature given that veterans are eligible for an array of federal cash and noncash benefits, many of which are tied to service-related disability (Wilmoth and London 2011). Thus, households that include veterans may have lower levels of material hardship than comparable nonveteran households do, regardless of whether any household member has a work-limiting disability.

This article uses pooled data from five waves of the Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP; 1992, 1993, 1996, 2001, and 2004 panels) to examine variation in the likelihood of household-level material hardship by veteran and disability statuses. Specifically, it examines the extent to which having a household member with a work-limiting disability moderates the relationship between having an adult household member who is a veteran and the experience of each of four types of material hardship: home hardship, medical hardship, bill-paying hardship, and food insufficiency. The analysis takes into account household

income-to-needs ratios and various household-level demographic characteristics.

Relevant Literature

The Well-Being of Veterans in the United States

In 2009, over 21.9 million Americans were veterans. They represent approximately 9.5 percent of those ages 18 years or older (US Census Bureau 2009). Experience with military service is particularly prevalent among cohorts of men ages 65 and older. In 2000, there were 9.4 million male veterans (65 percent) in that age group, many of whom served in World War II and the Korean War (Federal Interagency Forum on Aging-Related Statistics 2010). Although rates of experience with military service have declined in cohorts that came of age during the Vietnam War and the All-Volunteer Force (AVF) era, which began in 1974, a substantial portion of the working-age population served in the military: as of 2010, veterans accounted for 4 percent of the population ages 25–44 and for 11 percent of the population ages 45–64 (Wilmoth and London 2011).

The effect of military service on subsequent human capital development and socioeconomic attainment receives sustained attention in the literature (MacLean and Elder 2007; Bennett and McDonald, forthcoming; Kleykamp, forthcoming). By paying close attention to different historical and policy periods, these studies provide insight into the possible complexity of the relationship between military service and material well-being. Considerable evidence suggests that large numbers of World War II veterans took advantage of the generous GI Bill benefits to enhance their education beyond what they would have attained without military service (Bound and Turner 2002; Turner and Bound 2003; Mettler 2005). Yet, research that considers the effect of military service and the use of benefits on educational outcomes in other historical periods finds that veterans from the Cold War (MacLean 2005), the Vietnam War era (Teachman 2004, 2005; Teachman and Call 1996), and the AVF era (Teachman 2007) have lower educational attainments than nonveterans do. These findings might be due to increases in the educational attainment of the nonveteran population, changes in the availability of GI Bill benefits, and declines in the value of such benefits during the latter half of the twentieth century.

Other research focuses on occupational and income components of socioeconomic attainment and again provides mixed evidence that depends upon individual and historical specificities. Studies suggest that, compared with nonveterans from the same period, veterans from World War II did not experience higher earnings or substantial occupational gains; there is one exception: officers converted their service into postwar occupational advancement (Angrist and Krueger 1994; Dechter and

Elder 2004). Studies focusing mostly on Vietnam War–era veterans suggest that military service in a war zone and combat exposure are adversely associated with labor market experiences and negatively associated with earnings (Angrist 1990). In part, findings on the earnings of Vietnam War–era veterans may be attributable to post-traumatic stress disorder and other psychiatric disorders, as Vietnam veterans who meet the diagnostic criteria for those conditions are less likely to be working and, if working, have lower wages than comparable Vietnam veterans who do not meet those criteria (Savoca and Rosenheck 2000). There is also evidence that military service substantially decreases accumulated net worth among veterans relative to that among nonveterans, although the magnitude of this effect varies with length of service (Fitzgerald 2006).

In contrast, some studies suggest that military service has positive effects on socioeconomic outcomes (Sampson and Laub 1996). Earnings among African American and other, nonwhite World War II veterans (Teachman and Tedrow 2004) and also among AVF-era veterans are higher than those among their nonveteran counterparts (Angrist 1998). This provides evidence that military service can produce a positive turning point in the earnings trajectories of initially disadvantaged men (see also Elder 1986; Xie 1992). In addition, men from disadvantaged backgrounds who served during the AVF era are found to earn more than their civilian counterparts, but the difference in earnings dissipates after the service members are discharged (Teachman and Tedrow 2007).

Although research pays a substantial amount of attention to whether, how, and for whom military service affects human capital development and socioeconomic attainment, no known study specifically compares material hardship outcomes among veterans and nonveterans. Perhaps this is due in part to the assumption that current and former military personnel are unlikely to experience material hardships because they are eligible for and use benefits provided by the US Department of Veterans Affairs. Through the direct distribution of cash and noncash resources, such benefits can enhance human capital development. These benefits also directly subsidize housing, health care, and income. Yet, evidence from the 1 percent sample of the 2000 US Census suggests that a substantial percentage of veterans (8.4 percent) live in poverty, even though they are less likely than nonveterans to do so (London and Wilmoth 2008). In an analysis based on SIPP data, the authors (London et al. 2011) find that households with nondisabled veterans are less like to be in poverty than are households whose members include no veterans or disabled people; however, this advantage diminishes if the veteran is disabled or shares the household with an adult family member who has a work-limiting disability. This suggests that veteran status interacts with disability status in ways that could also affect material hardship. Also, a substantial additional percentage of the veteran population likely lives near poverty, and this puts them at risk for

material hardship. Veterans' experiences of material hardship may differ from those of nonveterans because nonveterans lack access to veterans benefits and services (Goodman and Stapleton 2007; US Department of Veterans Affairs 2009*a*, 2009*b*; Wilmoth and London 2011).[1]

Disability Status as a Moderator of Veteran Status

Although selection into military service may alter the risk of material hardship, a potential treatment effect of military service (or direct effect of program participation) is that veterans are more likely to be disabled than nonveterans are (Dobkin and Shabani 2009; MacLean 2010; Wilmoth et al. 2010, 2011). Military personnel are initially selected for their good health and functioning (National Research Council 2006), but military service carries a risk of injury and exposure to circumstances, such as combat, training-related accidents, interpersonal violence, substance abuse, and stress-related mental health problems, that increase the likelihood of having a functional limitation or disability (Elder and Clipp 1988, 1989; Clipp and Elder 1996; Bedard and Deschênes 2006; Dobkin and Shabani 2009; MacLean 2010). Exposure to these service-related risks may therefore distinguish veteran households from nonveteran households. They also may distinguish households that include veterans with disabilities from those that include nondisabled veterans.

Under some circumstances, military service can disrupt the life course by interfering with established marital, parenting, and occupational trajectories (Teachman, Call, and Wechsler 1993; Elder, Shanahan, and Clipp 1994; Tseng et al. 2006). Although trajectories vary by gender, race, ethnicity, social class origins, active-duty status, rank, combat exposure, and historical period, some evidence suggests that veterans have higher rates of divorce than nonveterans do (Burland and Lundquist, forthcoming; London, Allen, and Wilmoth, forthcoming). To the extent that military service causes interference and instability in marriage and life-course trajectories, it might impede veterans' access to social and economic resources or contribute to lifestyles that ultimately increase their risk of functional limitation or disability.

Previous research suggests that poor health and the presence of a work-limiting disability respectively increase the risk of material hardship (Mayer and Jencks 1989; Bauman 1998; Corcoran, Heflin, and Siefert 1999; Heflin, Corcoran, and Siefert 2007; She and Livermore 2007; Parish, Rose, and Andrews 2009). In the study closest to the current one, Peiyun She and Gina Livermore (2007) use data from the 1996

1. Veterans may also have different access to networks of family and community support than nonveterans do. Such access may differentially mitigate some material hardship. See Heflin, London, and Scott (2011) for a discussion of the distinctive and varying role of social network support in mitigating different types of material hardship among welfare-reliant and working-poor urban women.

panel of the SIPP to demonstrate that individuals with some type of disability compose a large share of the population reporting material hardship (49–62 percent depending on the hardship domain).

The risk of material hardship among households that include a disabled person is likely due in part to that person's limited employment, but the care work performed by nondisabled household members can impede their labor force participation and suppress household income (Cancian and Oliker 2000; London, Scott, and Hunter 2002; Pavalko and Henderson 2006). Few studies focus on care work in veteran households, although care for veterans with disabilities can require long-term commitment due to the debilitating nature of some combat-related injuries (Resnik and Allen 2007). A recent study finds that the majority of wounded veterans' caregivers experience relatively long spells of intense care work; this group provides care for about 10 hours per week for an average of 19 months, and 43 percent report that they expect to continue providing long-term care (Christensen et al. 2009). Such care work demands contribute to losses in time spent on paid employment and, thus, could increase the risk of material hardship.

This article extends the previous literature on the economic well-being of policy-relevant groups by documenting how levels of material hardship vary by veteran and disability statuses. It then examines the extent to which disability status moderates the relationship between veteran status and each of four specific material hardships. Previous research identifies links between military service and disability as well as between disability and hardship. By considering these links, the current study seeks to address an important gap in the literature.

Method

Sample and Procedures

To examine the relationships among veteran status, disability status, and each of four distinct types of material hardship, this research uses data from the 1992–2004 panels of the SIPP, a nationally representative household survey conducted in the United States by the US Census Bureau. Each interview in the panel consists of a core interview and a topical module interview. The core interview poses standard questions on demographics, labor force participation, and income. The topical module interview includes questions on topics that change from one interview wave to the next. Interview waves are conducted every 4 months. Data on material hardship come from the Adult Well-Being Topical Module, which was fielded in one wave of each panel from 1992 to 2004: the third wave of the 1992 SIPP panel (collected October 1992 through January 1993); the ninth wave of the 1993 SIPP panel (collected October 1995 through January 1996); the eighth wave of the 1996 SIPP

panel (collected August through November 1998); the eighth wave of the 2001 SIPP panel (collected June through September 2003); and the eighth wave of the 2004 SIPP panel (collected June through September 2005). If survey weights are used, results from analyses of SIPP data are representative of the civilian (nonveteran and veteran), noninstitutionalized population of the United States. Imputed data are used as provided by the US Census Bureau. The maximum analytic sample includes 58,686 individuals across all waves; as the notes to table 1 indicate, some models are estimated on slightly smaller samples because of missing values on the hardship questions.

Although veteran and disability statuses are measured at the individual level, material hardship is a household-level indicator. Individual-level analysis is likely to understate the associations among veteran status, work-limiting disability status, and the measured material hardships, because many nonveteran and able-bodied individuals share households with veterans and the disabled. Thus, all analyses are conducted at the household level.

Measures

This study incorporates established principles for the measurement of material hardship (Beverly 2001; Ouellette et al. 2004) into models that are based upon four domains of material need: home hardship, medical hardship, bill-paying hardship, and food insufficiency. It utilizes a number of dichotomous indicators from the SIPP instrument designed for this purpose. The measure of home hardship indicates whether, in the 12 months prior to the survey, a member of the respondent's household reportedly had a problem with the following: pests; a leaky roof or ceiling; broken windows; plumbing issues; or cracks in the walls, floor, or ceiling. Medical hardship indicates that a member of the respondent's household reportedly was not able to see a doctor or a dentist when he or she needed to do so in the 12 months prior to the survey. Bill-paying hardship measures respondents' reports of whether, in the 12 months prior to the survey, the household experienced any of three events: the household was behind on a utility, rent, or mortgage payment; the telephone was disconnected; or other essential expenses were not met. The food insufficiency measure is based on the following question: "Which of the following statements best describes the food eaten in your household in the last 12 months: enough to eat, sometimes not enough to eat, or often not enough to eat?" The responses "sometimes" and "often not enough to eat" are coded as food insufficient.

The measure of veteran status is based on whether a member of a household self-reports that he or she ever served on active duty (yes = 1). Work-limiting disability (hereafter disability) is defined as the presence of a member of the household with physical, mental, or other

condition that limits the kind or amount or work that can be performed (yes = 1). The SIPP poses this question to persons ages 16 or older. Household-level interaction terms are created to capture different possible combinations of disability and veteran statuses: disabled veteran present; nondisabled veteran present; disabled nonveteran present; and nondisabled veteran with disabled nonveteran present. These four household types are compared with all households in which no household member is either disabled or a veteran.[2]

The measure of disability likely underestimates the presence of disability among household members who are over age 65. These individuals are more likely than the general working-age population to be out of the labor force and therefore more likely to report functional limitations and disabilities other than a work-limiting disability. Thus, the analytic sample for the main models excludes households that include adults ages 65 years and older (households with adults in that age range make up 25 percent of all households in the total sample). Supplementary analyses estimate identical models on the total sample of households, and the results are consistent with those from the models estimated on the analytic sample that only includes households without adults ages 65 or older. Supplementary analyses also suggest that, among households with a working-aged member and at least one working-aged veteran, 25 percent include a veteran who served in or after May 1974 (the start of the AVF era), 39 percent include a veteran who served between August 1964 and April 1974 (the Vietnam War era), 17 percent served before August 1964 (most likely during the Cold War or the Korean War), and 14 percent served across multiple time periods.[3]

The study includes controls for a variety of household-level demographic characteristics that are known to be associated with material hardship. These include the following: the ratio of the annual household income to the federal needs standard for a household of that size (the income-to-needs ratio); the racial and ethnic composition of the household (black only, Hispanic only, Asian only, and other and mixed races or ethnicities; white-only households comprise the reference group); the highest level of education achieved by a household member (high school diploma, some college, college degree; the comparison group has less than a high school diploma); the marital status of the householder (never married or previously married, which includes divorced, widowed, or separated respondents; married respondents comprise the reference group); whether the household includes children younger than age 18

2. One additional combination is not distinctly represented in this typology: a disabled veteran and disabled nonveteran sharing the same household. Preliminary research suggests that the number of such households is very small. Thus, the analyses include these households in the disabled veteran category.

3. Data on period of service are missing for approximately 5 percent of veterans, so the reported percentages for period of service do not sum to 100 percent.

(yes = 1); and whether the household is located in an urban area (yes = 1).

Data Analysis

After describing the sample and the prevalence of each of the four material hardships overall, this study presents the proportion of households reporting each hardship. The typology is employed to distinguish households with respect to the work-limiting-disability and veteran statuses of all adult household members. Then, logistic regression models are employed to assess statistical significance using Stata statistical software (version 10.1). By including dichotomous variables for each year, the study effectively adjusts for the changes in material hardships over the 14-year period.[4] All analyses employ sample weights. Predicted probabilities for the main variables of interest are calculated in models that hold all other observed characteristics at their mean values. In addition, supplementary analyses test for statistically significant differences in the point estimates for each household type, which is defined by the veteran and disability statuses of adult household members. Statistically significant differences are reported in the tables and text.

Results

Table 1 shows descriptive statistics for all of the variables included in the analysis. The first row specifies the prevalence of each form of material hardship in the analytic sample. Among the four domains of material hardship, bill-paying hardship is reportedly the most common (19.39 percent). About 12 percent of households are reported to experience medical hardship; home hardships and food insufficiency are relatively rare experiences, with respondents in approximately 3 percent of all households report experiencing these.

The first column of table 1 presents the sample characteristics. In the left-most column, the first five household disability- and veteran-status categories represent the key independent variable in this analysis. The largest share of households, over two-thirds, includes neither a veteran nor a disabled household member; 13.67 percent of households reportedly include a nondisabled veteran, and 13.27 percent of households include a disabled nonveteran. Less than 3 percent of all households include a disabled veteran, and only 1.21 percent are classified as nondisabled-veteran households with a disabled-nonveteran member.

4. This set of dichotomous variables absorbs all unmeasured characteristics that are correlated with time and not included in the model. Thus, the 2001 dichotomous variable captures the effect of both the economic recession of 2001 and the Earned Income Tax Credit expansion in that year. This approach to controlling for historical period effects does not allow the reader to identify elements in a particular year that drive an observed year effect.

Table 1

PERCENTAGE REPORTING SPECIFIC HARDSHIPS, BY HOUSEHOLD DISABILITY AND VETERAN STATUS CATEGORIES

	Sample	Home Hardship	Medical Hardship	Bill-Paying Hardship	Food Insufficiency
Analytic sample	100	2.65	12.1	19.39	3.22
Household disability and veteran status:					
Nondisabled veteran	13.67	1.26***	6.86***	10.46***	1.19***
Disabled veteran	2.71	5.51***	19.93***	24.89***	4.87***
Nondisabled veteran with a disabled nonveteran	1.21	2.86	13.02	18.92	3.28
Disabled nonveteran	13.27	6.13***	22.54***	34.98***	9.01***
No person with disability or veteran	69.14	2.15***	9.89***	16.58***	2.59***
Household race or ethnicity:					
White only	71.85	2.0***	11.2***	15.69***	2.43***
Black only	12.03	4.58***	14.91***	35.76***	5.66***
Hispanic only	8.58	4.85***	14.89***	27.29***	6.45***
Asian only	2.40	2.67	13.67^{+}	19.91	4.01^{+}
Other and mixed race or ethnicity	5.14	3.7***	13.7***	22.68***	3.96*
Highest educational attainment in household:					
Less than high school	7.65	5.57***	19.99***	33.21***	9.3***
Graduated high school	25.01	3.67***	15.28***	25.94***	4.8***
Some college	33.20	2.68	14.24***	22.74***	3.29
College	34.14	1.21***	5.97***	8.36***	.71***
Marital status of householder:					
Married	40.44	1.75***	8.66***	13.42***	1.58***
Never married	21.35	3.03***	13.94***	23.56***	4.53***
Previously married	38.21	3.8***	16.75***	26.73***	5.13***
Household income-to-needs ratio (mean; range = −6.2–101.9)[a]	3.86	2.10***	2.19***	2.07***	1.52***

Children <18 years in household:					
No	58.6	2.22***	11.5***	15.4***	2.75***
Yes	41.71	3.27***	12.92***	24.8***	3.87***
Urban household:					
No	18.08	3.37***	13.61***	20.31***	3.21
Yes	81.92	2.45***	11.67***	19.12***	3.23
Survey year:[b]					
1992	9.92	4.0	13.96	19.91	2.89
1993	28.78	NA	8.83	14.00	4.23
1996	19.85	3.17	12.67	21.13	2.92
2001	17.05	2.31	11.13	18.85	2.76
2004	24.41	2.15	13.61	21.28	3.16

SOURCE.—Authors' calculations using data from the Survey of Income and Program Participation.

NOTE.—NA = not available. Statistical significance estimated using χ^2-tests for categorical variables and *t*-tests for continuous variables. Unless otherwise noted, results are presented as percentages.

[a] Values presented in the row represent the average for households.

[b] Levels of individual hardship are statistically different by year in estimates using the χ^2-test of independence.

$^{+}$ $p < .10$.

* $p < .05$.

*** $p < .001$.

Almost three-quarters of the households include whites only; 12.03 percent include blacks only, 8.58 percent include Hispanics only, 2.40 percent include Asians only, and 5.14 percent include persons of other and mixed races and ethnicities. The distribution of highest educational attainment in the household ranges from 7.65 percent (less than high school education) to 34.14 percent (a college degree or higher). One-fourth of households include a member who graduated from high school, and 33.2 percent include one who has some college. About 40 percent of householders report that they are married (40.44 percent), though sizable percentages report that they are previously married (38.21 percent) and never married (21.35 percent). About 42 percent of households reportedly include at least one minor child. The mean income-to-needs ratio is 3.86, and supplementary analysis (not shown) suggests that almost 14 percent of sampled households live at or below the poverty threshold. About 82 percent of households live in urban areas.

Table 1 also shows the percentage of household types reporting each of the four domains of material hardship. Several patterns emerge regarding variation in material hardship across the veteran- and disability-status categories. First, reports of all forms of material hardship are lowest among nondisabled-veteran households: 1.26 percent report home hardship, 6.86 percent report medical hardship, 10.46 percent report bill-paying hardship, and 1.19 percent report food insufficiency. Rates of material hardship are relatively low among households in which no member is a veteran or disabled, although they are somewhat higher than rates among nondisabled-veteran households. Rates of each type of material hardship are reportedly highest among disabled-nonveteran households: 6.13 percent for home hardship, 22.54 percent for medical hardship, 34.98 percent for bill-paying hardship, and 9.01 percent for food insufficiency. Disabled-veteran households have relatively high levels of each type of material hardship; they rank second-highest by a substantial margin in each hardship domain: 5.51 percent for home hardship, 19.93 percent for medical hardship, 24.89 percent for bill-paying hardship, and 4.87 percent for food insufficiency. In all four domains, nondisabled-veteran households that include a disabled nonveteran do substantially better than households with a disabled veteran.

A second observation from the top panel of table 1 is that bill-paying hardship and medical hardship are consistently the first- and second-most frequently reported hardship domains across all household types. However, veteran and nonveteran households differ in their likelihood of reporting home hardship and food insufficiency: nonveteran households (regardless of whether they include a person with a disability) report higher levels of food insufficiency than home hardship, but veteran households (regardless of whether they include a person with a

disability) are more likely to report home hardship than food insufficiency.

Table 1 also shows that demographic and compositional differences across households are related to the prevalence of material hardship. In general, each type of material hardship is reportedly more common among black and Hispanic households than among white, Asian, and other mixed-race households. Among households whose members' highest level of education is less than a high school diploma, the percentage reporting each hardship is greater than the percentage reporting it among households with a high school diploma or more. Never-married householders respectively report more of each hardship than their married counterparts do, and the same is true of previously married householders. So too, each of the percentages is higher for urban than for nonurban households, and they are higher for households that include members under age 18 than for those whose members are all over that age. In addition, the average income-to-needs ratio in each hardship category is lower than the average ratio for the analytic sample as a whole. The average ratio is particularly low among the subsample reporting food insufficiency.

Table 2 presents results from multivariate logistic regression models that examine each domain of material hardship in relation to each household-level configuration of veteran and disability statuses among adult household members. The models control for other known correlates of household-level hardship. In the first column, estimates suggest that nondisabled-veteran households are not statistically significantly different from households in the comparison group (i.e., those that do not include a veteran or a disabled person). However, households that include a person with a disability, regardless of the disabled individual's veteran status, are estimated to face an elevated risk of home hardship. Disabled-veteran households are 2.73 times more likely to report experiencing home hardship than are households with no veteran or disabled person. Compared to the same reference group, disabled-nonveteran households are 2.27 times more likely to report home hardship. Finally, nondisabled-veteran households with a disabled nonveteran are 1.91 times more likely to report home hardship than are households with no disabled person and no veteran. Results from supplementary analyses (see table 2, note *a*) suggest that disabled-veteran households are statistically significantly more likely than nondisabled-veteran households to report experiencing home hardship. It is useful to keep in mind that the overall prevalence of experiencing a home hardship is rather low (2.65 percent across the full analytic sample), but disabled-veteran households face the highest probability of reporting this material hardship (4.38 percent) and a substantively higher probability than nondisabled households do (1.38 percent). Although

Table 2

LOGISTIC REGRESSION ANALYSIS OF FOUR TYPES OF MATERIAL HARDSHIP

	HOME HARDSHIP		MEDICAL HARDSHIP		BILL-PAYING HARDSHIP		FOOD INSUFFICIENCY	
	b (SE)	OR	b (SE)	OR	b (SE)	OR	b (SE)	OR
Household veteran and disability statuses (no veteran or person with disability):								
Nondisabled veteran	−.234[a] (.143)	.79	−.110[a,*] (.056)	.90	−.098[a,*] (.047)	.91	−.208[a] (.142)	.81
Disabled veteran	1.006*** (.158)	2.73	.780*** (.075)	2.17	.672*** (.071)	1.96	.750*** (.150)	2.12
Nondisabled veteran with a disabled nonveteran	.648* (.286)	1.91	.632*** (.126)	1.88	.731*** (.111)	2.08	.539 (.292)	1.71
Disabled nonveteran	.821*** (.080)	2.27	.648*** (.038)	1.91	.714*** (.034)	2.04	.870*** (.070)	2.39
Household race or ethnicity (white only):								
Black only	.305*** (.093)	1.36	−.185*** (.047)	.83	.459*** (.038)	1.58	.103 (.086)	1.11
Hispanic only	.565*** (.113)	1.76	−.134* (.056)	.87	.123** (.047)	1.13	.344*** (.090)	1.41
Asian only	−.044 (.220)	.96	−.131 (.096)	.88	−.152 (.083)	.86	.281 (.172)	1.32
Other and mixed race or ethnicity	.514*** (.130)	1.67	.099 (.065)	1.10	.106*** (.047)	1.25	.436*** (.122)	1.55
Highest education in household (less than HS):								
HS graduate	.040 (.105)	1.04	.006 (.054)	1.00	.106* (.047)	1.11	−.211* (.082)	.81
Some college	.042 (.111)	.96	.081** (.054)	1.08	.112* (.047)	1.12	−.294** (.092)	.75

College	−.388**	.68	−.383***	.68	−.450***	.64	−1.200***	.30
	(.126)		(.064)		(.056)		(.139)	
Marital status of householder (married):								
Never-married	.408***	1.50	.318***	1.37	.502***	1.65	.748***	2.11
	(.105)		(.045)		(.039)		(.100)	
Previously married	.432***	1.54	.400***	1.49	.552***	1.74	.719***	2.15
	(.096)		(.038)		(.033)		(.089)	
Household income-to-needs ratio	−.187***	.83	−.265***	.77	−.297***	.74	−.405***	.67
	(.024)		(.015)		(.013)		(.064)	
Child <18 years in household (no):								
Yes	.390***	1.48	.138***	1.15	.625***	1.87	.337***	1.40
	(.071)		(.034)		(.029)		(.065)	
Urban household (no):								
Yes	−.140	.87	.024	1.02	.120***	1.13	.233***	1.26
	(.076)		(.031)		(.027)		(.058)	
Survey year (1992):								
1993[b]			−.455***	.62	−.354***	.70	.598***	1.82
			(.059)		(.053)		(.108)	
1996	−.329***	.72	−.135**	.87	.027	1.03	−.099	.91
	(.096)		(.055)		(.049)		(.110)	
2001	−.543***	.58	−.237***	.79	−.076	.93	−.029	.97
	(.127)		(.060)		(.053)		(.130)	
2004	−.762***	.47	−.130**	.88	−.026	.97	−.077	.93
	(.10)		(.053)		(.048)		(.108)	
Intercept	−3.176***		−1.370***		−1.391***		−3.265***	
	(.165)		(.084)		(.074)		(.197)	
No. observations	48,484		57,514		57,057		57,597	
Wald χ^2	611.23***		2,138.54***		4,304.15***		1,210.21***	

NOTE.—SE = standard error; OR = odds ratio; HS = high school. Reference categories are identified in parentheses within the left-most column.

[a] Point estimates for disabled-veteran and nondisabled-veteran households differ to a statistically significantly degree ($p < .0001$).

[b] Home hardship not available in 1993.

* $p < .05$.

** $p < .01$.

*** $p < .001$.

veteran status appears to be protective in relation to home hardship, the protection only accrues to households that do not include an adult with a work-limiting disability.

The pattern of results is similar in the second model, which predicts medical hardship. The sign on the coefficient for nondisabled-veteran households is once again negative, but this difference is statistically significant. The results suggest that nondisabled-veteran households have 10 percent lower odds of reporting medical hardship than households in the comparison group. Households that include a disabled adult are estimated to face an increased likelihood of reporting a medical hardship, regardless of veteran status; disabled-veteran households are estimated to be 2.17 times more likely than the comparison group households to report medical hardship; the odds are 1.88 higher for nondisabled-veteran households with a disabled nonveteran. Supplementary analyses suggest once again that disabled-veteran households experience statistically significantly more medical hardship than nondisabled-veteran households do. In addition, the difference in the coefficients for disabled-veteran and disabled-nonveteran households is marginally statistically significant ($p = .089$). In substantive terms, the predicted probability of experiencing a medical hardship is 7.9 percent for nondisabled-veteran households but double that (16.8 percent) for disabled-veteran households. Although disabled veterans have access to an array of veteran health benefits that are not available to nonveterans or to veterans with no disability, there is no evidence that the risk of medical hardship is lower in disabled-veteran households than in disabled-nonveteran households; the predicted probability that disabled-nonveteran households experience a medical hardship is 14.15 percent.

Results in the third model show the estimated odds of experiencing bill-paying hardship, and the patterns are very similar to those for the experience of home and medical hardships. Nondisabled-veteran households enjoy a statistically significantly lower likelihood of experiencing bill-paying hardship than that faced by households in the comparison group, though the substantive effect is only moderate (the predicted probabilities are 12.14 percent for nondisabled-veteran households and 13.22 percent for the comparison group households). In contrast, the odds of experiencing a bill-paying hardship are similarly elevated among all of the households that include a disabled person, regardless of veteran status. Compared to households in which no member is a veteran or disabled, disabled-veteran households are estimated to be 1.96 times more likely to experience a bill-paying hardship; nondisabled-veteran households with a disabled nonveteran are 2.08 times more likely, and disabled-nonveteran households are 2.04 times more likely. The predicted probabilities are 22.43 percent for disabled-veteran households, 23.43 percent for nondisabled-veteran households, and 21.74 percent for disabled-nonveteran households. Results from supplementary anal-

yses suggest that disabled-veteran households experience statistically significantly more bill-paying hardship than nondisabled-veteran households do. In the case of bill-paying hardship, as with other forms of material hardship, the advantage that accrues to veteran households appears to decline and, in fact, becomes a disadvantage, if the veteran is disabled.

The final model estimates the likelihood of experiencing food insufficiency. Among nondisabled-veteran households and households in which a nondisabled veteran lives with a disabled nonveteran, the estimated odds of experiencing food insufficiency are not statistically significantly different from the odds that this hardship is experienced by households in which no member is a disabled person or veteran. The odds of experiencing food insufficiency are 2.12 times higher among disabled-veteran households and 2.39 times higher among disabled-nonveteran households. Note that the overall prevalence of reported food insufficiency is low, but the substantive difference in the odds of experiencing food insufficiency is meaningful. The predicted probability for a disabled-veteran household is 2.39 percent, but that for a nondisabled nonveteran household is 1.1 percent. Consistent with the findings for other forms of material hardship, results from supplementary analysis suggest that disabled-veteran households are statistically significantly more likely than nondisabled-veteran households to experience food insufficiency.

The other covariates in each of the four models yield estimates that are consistent with previous research in all regards. Black-only and Hispanic-only households are more likely than white-only households to experience home hardship, bill-paying hardship, and food insufficiency but are slightly less likely than their white-only counterparts to experience medical hardship. Households that include at least one person who has a college education are less likely to experience each measured hardship than are households in which all members have less than a high school education. Households with never-married and previously married householders are estimated to have greater likelihood of hardship than households with married householders. Households with children under age 18 are estimated to be at greater likelihood than all-adult households. The household-level income-to-needs ratio is estimated to be negatively associated with the likelihood of experiencing each type of hardship, such that the odds of experiencing each decline as the ratio rises. Living in an urban area is estimated to be positively associated with the experience of bill-paying hardship and food insufficiency. Reports of home and medical hardships, respectively, are estimated to decline across the survey periods, but there are no clear patterns of sustained change in the experience of bill-paying hardship or food insufficiency across the survey years.

Discussion

This study contributes to the literatures on veteran well-being and material hardship. Using nationally representative data from the 1992–2004 panels of the SIPP, it examines how adult work-limiting disability status moderates the relationships between veteran status and each of four material hardships: home hardship, medical hardship, bill-paying hardship, and food insufficiency. The results suggest that veteran and disability statuses jointly influence material hardships net of the household's income-to-needs ratio, household demographics, and compositional characteristics. Although nondisabled-veteran households experience levels of hardship that are similar to (home hardship and food insufficiency) or statistically significantly lower than (medical and bill-paying hardships) those experienced by households with no disabled person or veteran, the levels of material hardship are statistically significantly higher for all other household types that include a disabled person than for households in the reference group (with the exception of food insufficiency among households that include a nondisabled veteran and a disabled nonveteran). The odds ratios for all contrasts are in the range of 1.88 to 2.73, and some of the highest increases in the estimated odds of hardship are in households that include a veteran. Moreover, disabled-veteran households are estimated to experience statistically significantly more of each type of hardship than nondisabled-veteran households do. To the authors' knowledge, this is the first study to document material hardships among households with different configurations of veteran and disability statuses.

Several limitations should be noted. First, the results in this study should be interpreted as descriptive and do not provide direct evidence that military service has a treatment effect on material hardship. It is possible that veteran households differ from other households on unobserved factors, and those factors could influence their probability of reporting a hardship. Second, this study measures disability as a physical, mental, or other condition that limits the kind or amount of work an individual can perform. Such a measure does not capture the full range of specific functional limitations and disabled statuses that could influence a household's chances of experiencing material hardship. Of particular note is the exclusion from the analysis those households that contain members who are ages 65 and older. The authors exclude these households because the measure of work-limiting disability underestimates disability among older adults. However, children with disabilities may be present in the households, and their presence may also affect household well-being. As a consequence, the estimates provide a downward-biased account of the effect of disability on the risk of material hardship at the household level. Also, because of sample size and data limitations, this study is not able to distinguish among veterans by the

historical time periods of their service or by their military service experiences (e.g., branch of service, rank, military occupational specialty, exposure to combat). The moderating influence of veteran status on the relationship between disability and material hardship is likely to vary with the characteristics of the veteran. Finally, because this study is largely descriptive, it does not explore how participation in different disability or veteran programs affects well-being. This is an important topic for future research.

Future research should focus attention on whether the provision of benefits and services mitigates material hardships in veterans' households. Provisions from the US Department of Veterans Affairs directly aim to address service-related needs. These provisions try to mitigate some of the disruption that military service can cause. They compensate and care for persons harmed in the course of their service, as well as their dependents. They generally reward those who have taken risks and made various personal sacrifices in service to their country. These benefits and services represent two approaches in the effort to address the needs of veterans. Some benefits work in tandem with social insurance programs, such as Social Security and Medicare (Goodman and Stapleton 2007). Others are designed to accommodate the unique needs of specific subgroups of veterans (e.g., veterans with service-connected post-traumatic stress disorder, illnesses, and disabilities; veterans from specific wars; and other veterans with unique service-related experiences).

Provisions for veterans have expanded over time, but the basic types of benefits have remained the same since World War II (US Department of Veterans Affairs 2009*a*). To qualify, the service member must have performed full-time, active-duty service and must not be separated from service through dishonorable discharge. Eligibility for some benefits is contingent on service during wartime. Members of Reserve and National Guard components qualify for benefits under certain conditions. Special provisions are made for other historically relevant groups (US Department of Veterans Affairs 2009*b*). Veterans with service-connected disabilities are given priority in access to benefits and receive premiums in resource allocations. This priority depends on an individual's disability rating, which is determined by the US Department of Veterans Affairs and can range from 0 to 100 percent (Wilmoth and London 2011). Thus, access to veterans benefits varies considerably across the population of individuals who served in the military.

This study's results suggest that it is important to recognize this underlying heterogeneity in the veteran population, and particularly the heterogeneity in access to veterans benefits, time period served, and other military-related experiences. Although nondisabled-veteran households may fare better in terms of experiences of material hardship than comparable households, disabled-veteran households face a dis-

tinct disadvantage relative to households with nondisabled nonveterans. Specific veteran programs were created to address the special challenges faced by disabled-veteran households. As such, they may not meet the needs of households with nondisabled veterans. For example, these programs may fail nondisabled veterans who require assistance to address basic needs for adequate housing, medical care, and food, or to pay bills. Further research is needed to investigate whether nonparticipation is a key issue in current veterans programs and whether, as recent analyses suggest, the veterans program participants experience a hole in the social safety net (Fulton et al. 2009; Perl 2010).

Note

Colleen M. Heflin is an associate professor at the Truman School of Public Affairs at the University of Missouri. Her interdisciplinary research program focuses on understanding the survival strategies employed by low-income households to make ends meet, the implications of using these strategies for individual and household well-being, and how public policies influence well-being. A central focus of her work has been on understanding the causes and consequences of material hardship. **Janet M. Wilmoth** has a PhD in sociology and demography, with a minor in gerontology, from the Pennsylvania State University. She is a professor of sociology, director of the Aging Studies Institute, and senior fellow in the Institute for Veterans and Military Families at Syracuse University. Her research examines older adult migration and living arrangements, health status, and financial security. She and Andrew London are collaborating on several projects about military service and various life course outcomes. **Andrew S. London** is professor and chair of sociology, senior research associate in the Center for Policy Research, senior fellow in the Institute for Veterans and Military Families, and codirector of the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Studies Program at Syracuse University. His research focuses on the health, care, and well-being of stigmatized and vulnerable populations, including persons living with HIV, welfare-reliant and working poor women and children, the previously incarcerated, and veterans. This research was supported by a Survey of Program Participation (SIPP) Analytic Research Small Grant from the National Poverty Center, Gerald R. Ford School of Public Policy, University of Michigan (Co-PIs: Colleen M. Heflin, Andrew S. London, and Janet M. Wilmoth). Additional support was provided by a grant from the National Institute on Aging: "Military Service and Health Outcomes in Later Life" (1 R01 AG028480-01; PI: Janet M. Wilmoth).

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Structuring Performance: Performance Contracts, Organizational Logics, and Leadership in Welfare-to-Work Programs

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This qualitative comparison of two welfare-to-work organizations, one private and for-profit, one nonprofit, examines the influence of state performance contracts on managers' responses to welfare service provision and on clients' employment outcomes. Despite organizational theories that suggest that the mandates of state performance contracts and state monitoring may prompt agencies to become increasingly similar to each other, this analysis finds that the differing organizational logics of for-profit and nonprofit service couple with the behaviors of managers to lead to starkly different organizational structures, processes, and client employment outcomes.

This study examines how two private social service organizations, one for-profit and one nonprofit, perform in the context of an imposing external demand: state welfare performance contracts. It shows that governmental contracts push organizations to develop similar organizational structures but for-profit organizations differ from nonprofit counterparts in assumptions and practices. Joan Acker (1990) describes these factors as organizational logics. Coupled with the actions of the organizations' leaders, these logics shape the organizations' behaviors and provision of services, producing starkly different client outcomes.

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This article adds to the growing body of literature on the potential unintended consequences that this type of privatization model may have for welfare service provision and recipients' employment outcomes.

Existing research on the organization of welfare agencies overwhelmingly focuses on comparisons between the public and private provision of services (US General Accounting Office 1996; Hatry 1999; Sanger 2003) or on welfare processing centers (Soss 2002; Watkins-Hayes 2009). Much of the research on the distinction between for-profit and nonprofit organizations overlooks the consequences of their differing forms for social outcomes (Heinrich 2000), the role of leadership in outcomes, or both. The current study examines the role of for-profit and nonprofit auspices and leadership within welfare job-training sites.[1] It explores the ways in which performance contracting guides management decision making and also how competing logics in two different types of organizations shape internal operations and thus recipients' employment outcomes.

Proponents of privatization's expanding role in social service delivery posit that opening the provision of social services to the private market results in competition that reduces costs, raises quality, and increases the flexibility of programs (Savas 1987). According to this line of reasoning, private contractors will avoid the inefficiencies of government bureaucracies and reduce corruption (Smith and Lipsky 1993; Wallin 2001). Critics of privatization maintain, however, that moving public services to the private sector relinquishes public responsibility over public funds, threatens fiscal accountability, weakens a community's ability to forge policies that represent its collective interests, and decreases citizen participation in government (Smith and Lipsky 1993; Nightingale and Pindus 1997). Objectors also contend that privatization increases the temptation of private institutions to reduce quality of service and to cream the best clients in order to reduce costs and maximize profit (Smith and Lipsky 1993; Nightingale and Pindus 1997). Supporters of privatization typically assume that there is little to no transaction cost in privatizing government service; the argument follows that the expertise found in government agencies is often missing from the private sector or in short supply. To compete effectively, the private sector must hire experts from the public sector as a solution, but such actions reveal

1. Welfare intake offices now serve primarily as compliance offices (i.e., sites for the enforcement of compliance with program rules and procedures). Staff maintain control over clients' benefits but are not engaged in daily interactions with the same set of clients. However, job-training personnel have more frequent and ongoing interactions with clients. These staff are singularly responsible for making sure that recipients execute their welfare obligations. In addition, job-training staff are in charge of recipients' training experience. They decide whether recipients receive educational services or are forced directly into employment. Investigating what occurs within these training programs and the inner workings of these agencies is integral to understanding how recipients' employment results are produced.

the challenges of this type of contracting (Smith and Lipsky 1993; Nightingale and Pindus 1997; Frumkin 2002; Smith 2010).[2]

In any case, social service organizations are widely acknowledged to be embedded in systems that lack consensus or internal consistency, guided by rules that require interpretation, and constrained by variation in their organizational networks. All of these factors permit discretion on the part of workers (Hasenfeld 1999, 2000). Such discretion produces wide variability in organizational behavior, and this variability may affect client outcomes. Jodi Sandfort's (2010) study of three different welfare-to-work organizations in Michigan shows precisely how this occurs. Sandfort finds that social welfare agencies operate under the same mandates as for-profit agencies but function differently because of variations in the ways in which management interprets the state's rules. The study thus shows the salience of differing organizational logics on organizational behavior. However, there is substantial evidence indicating that differences in organizational logics between nonprofits and for-profits may not lead to differences in service quality or client outcomes. In a study of Medicare patients, Frank Sloan and colleagues (2001) find that for-profit hospitals equal nonprofit hospitals on several outcome measures but payments to the for-profits are higher.[3] The research also shows that there are no systematic differences in efficiency between for-profit and nonprofit hospitals. In a study of voluntary job-training programs operating from 1984 to 1993 under the Job Training Partnership Act of 1982 (96 Stat. 1322), Carolyn Heinrich (2000) similarly finds that for-profit organizations do not differ consistently from nonprofit counterparts in clients' degree of disadvantage, employment outcomes, or earnings outcomes, if the two types of organizations have similar clientele.[4] Neither Sloan and associates (2001) nor Heinrich (2000) considers management styles across the varying organizational forms. However, Kate Cooney's research (2006, 2007, 2011) suggests that differences between the organizational logics of the for-profit and nonprofit business models can conflict with the social service goals. Cooney examines

2. Organizations receiving Temporary Assistance for Needy Families program (TANF) funds have a vested interest in developing long-term relationships with the government agencies that fund them. In many areas, contracting for-profits create those ties by hiring government staff with detailed knowledge of relevant agencies.

3. However, Sloan and associates (2001) also note that the for-profit hospitals are located in different places than the nonprofits; the strategy is typically employed to increase the share of privately insured patients among the total. That study partially controls for this problem by selecting subjects on the basis of diagnostic category, but hospitals are known to manipulate these categories for a variety of reasons, including the desire to increase the size of payments (Silverman and Skinner 2004).

4. Heinrich (2000) does find that, at the point when the client's program participation is terminated, for-profit programs produce higher wages and employment for clients than nonprofits do, but these differences diminish with time. Perhaps her most important finding is that performance incentives, a fundamental feature of welfare-to-work programs, have strong statistically significant effects; however, the effects are found to be the same for both program types.

the emergence of hybrid organizations. These are nonprofits that develop for-profit subsidiaries, which serve as sites for job training and economic development. Her ethnographic exploration highlights the ways in which organizational logics shape service delivery. It also elucidates the way in which commercial goals can contribute to organizational conflict and negatively affect clients' experiences.

Building on these works, the current study probes the organizational processes guiding welfare service provision in two agencies that are bound by performance contracts from the same state.[5] The authors seek to explain variation in clients' employment outcomes. That is, the study asks whether the organizational forms and logics that distinguish for-profit from nonprofit organizations shape the way that managers meet contractual objectives and the employment outcomes of welfare recipients.

Although states have funded the privatization of social service delivery for more than 70 years, the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 (PRWORA; 110 Stat. 2105) increases the involvement of private for-profits in social service provision. The current research provides some insight into one of the potential unintended consequences of this increase. Although distinguishing for-profits from nonprofits can be difficult, their organizational forms and logics differ substantially. If coupled with variations in leadership styles, such differences can greatly influence social service provision and lead to differences in client outcomes.

The Influence of Performance Contracts on Organizational Incentives

Following the privatization trend, PRWORA imposes accountability and performance standards on welfare job-training programs, creating new incentive structures for clients and institutions.[6] The current model of accountability did not exist in welfare-to-work services prior to PRWORA's enactment. The traditional approach to contracting social services was noncompetitive; the state made quasi-grant arrangements directly and primarily with nonprofit organizations (Hatry and Durman 1985). But PRWORA removed all existing restrictions on contracting, including those that prevented nongovernmental agencies

5. In sociology, the concept of agency is used in two quite different ways: the first refers to actors' behavioral discretion; the second refers to a specific theory of organizational behavior that finds its roots in economics (Shapiro 2005). The current study uses the term in the first sense.

6. Contracting, as a form of privatization, is not a new strategy in social service provision. In the 1960s, the presence of new federal funding fueled contracting; in the 1970s, it was stimulated by fiscal strains and the search for efficiency (or at least for a reduction in fixed costs). Institutional consequences have been mixed.

from making intake and eligibility determinations. In the 1996 legislation some large companies saw a potentially multibillion-dollar industry ripe for the picking (Nightingale and Pindus 1997). Such incentives made competition for employment- and training-services contracts commonplace among for-profit agencies.

Previous studies hypothesized that the use of performance incentives is positively related to program performance (Heinrich 2000), but findings are inconsistent. In fact, there is evidence that contracts have a statistically significant and negative effect on some institutions if payment is based solely or primarily on placement outcomes or quotas. Such contracts also are found to distort institutions' motivations to provide quality services to clients (Brodkin, Fuqua, and Thoren 2002). Some research suggests that performance contracts encourage organizations to invest their resources (staff time, expertise, and material supports) in those activities that contribute directly to the bottom line (Brodkin et al. 2002; Smith 2010). For example, agencies may require that workers restrict their time with clients to meet production quotas. To save on costs, institutions may hire poorly trained staff at low salaries; organizations may also limit or refuse some services essential to clients' long-term success.

Leadership: Incentive Structures, Processes, and Outcomes

Under the 1996 law, welfare-to-work agencies must develop strategies that allow them to fulfill their contractual obligations to the contracting state. To this end, state contracts afford program administrators and managers considerable discretion in decision making, so long as stipulated performance standards are met, particularly standards related to job placements. Although agencies may relish the new freedom, the increased flexibility comes at a cost. Agency leadership must make daily decisions within the parameters of their contractual obligations. The requirements imposed by state performance contracts can sometimes conflict with the needs of staff and clients, leading administrators to reduce or eliminate essential resources. Such decisions may negatively affect their relationships with workers, filtering down to the way workers associate with clients and ultimately shaping clients' employment outcomes.

These external pressures can create disincentives for programs to serve clients well. Operating under an outcome-oriented approach to service delivery, for-profit managers may balk at expenditures (e.g., hiring a general equivalency diploma [GED] instructor) that do not get clients into jobs quickly. Such tensions are likely to be particularly pronounced in for-profit agencies bound by welfare reform's performance guidelines, because management faces several conflicting demands. Pressure to maximize output while minimizing costs is likely to conflict

with the client-centered goals that many caseworkers bring to the job (Maynard-Moody and Musheno 2000). For example, federal and state governments require case management services in job training while simultaneously pushing a work-first philosophy, which emphasizes moving clients into employment as the primary goal. A case management approach, which is viewed by reformist policy makers as essential to increasing client motivation, derives primarily from social work practice. It includes individual assessment of clients, arranging multiple services, and engaging in direct and personalized relationships with them. But the social work approach inherently clashes with the punitive aspects of welfare reform's work-first philosophy and the outcomes-based model of government. As Joel Handler and Yeheskel Hasenfeld (2007) argue, this work-first philosophy incorporates the myth that welfare recipients prefer welfare to work. According to this view, the primary task of the program is to push recipients to find employment, and there is little concern for the barriers (e.g., ill health, lack of education, or lack of job skills) that prevent them from finding a job. It is reasonable to expect that these two models will conflict, particularly in institutions where staff have divergent viewpoints or where management and staff may differ about which perspective is more effective. If staff are recruited from social work backgrounds, they will likely to place a higher priority on case management than will agency executives.

This contrast in organizational logics and objectives raises the study's central research question: to what extent is there latitude within powerful external constraints, such as performance contracts? Specifically, to what extent can differences in organizational logics, goals, and leadership mediate and modify these constraints in such a way as to permit variation in structures, processes, and outcomes consistent with their logics and objectives?

Setting

The current research focuses on two welfare-to-work programs: WorkOpts and Chances. Both are located in a large northeastern city, hereafter called Porter City.[7] WorkOpts is a large, for-profit human service agency that enrolls clients who have received welfare for 5 years or more (WorkOpts describes recipients with 5 or more years of welfare receipt as "extended TANF clients"). These are typically characterized as the hardest clients to serve because they tend to have multiple periods on welfare and the duration of those periods tends to be longer than that of recipients with less aggregate welfare experience (Danziger, Kalil,

7. For a complete description of the methodology and the site of the research, see Johnson (2005). Names are changed to preserve the confidentiality of the organizations, their staff, and their clients.

and Anderson 2000; Miller 2002). Chances is a smaller, neighborhood, nonprofit agency that mostly serves welfare recipients who have received welfare for less than 2 years. According to national research, Chances' clients are a more typical representation of welfare recipients than are their counterparts at WorkOpts, because welfare recipients usually spend less than 2 years on welfare (Harris 1996; Hays 2003). Chances also serves a small percentage of clients who have been on welfare for more than 2 years but fewer than 5.

A multinational for-profit company operates WorkOpts programs, and a local, nonprofit, human-service agency manages the Chances program. Although the agencies' state contracts focus each organization on a different client profile, the two offer nominally identical services: job-readiness classes, job counseling, educational classes (or referral to such classes), on-the-job training, and job placement. These commonalities allow the current study to rule out the availability of program services (or lack thereof) as an explanation for different outcomes and enable the authors to draw some generalizations across programs.

WorkOpts is a subsidiary of Headly, a national marketing research and consulting firm that has served domestic and international clients in industry and government since the 1960s. Headly provides marketing solutions to many of the largest corporations in the United States. Because of Headly's limited experience in providing job training to the welfare population, the WorkOpts program began as a demonstration project in April 2002. Headly's initial contract with the state required WorkOpts to move 10 percent of its welfare clients to unsubsidized employment. Shortly after WorkOpts met the demonstration project's state-contracted benchmark, Headly renegotiated its contract to increase WorkOpts's catchment area, and the program began accepting welfare clients in October 2002. WorkOpts employs over 45 staff members. The staff includes 10 caseworkers, two or three job developers, a director of case management, a supervisor of job placement, one full-time secretary, two part-time administrative helpers, a work site manager, and an administrative assistant.

The Chances program is located in the westernmost part of the city in a predominately black neighborhood. This small program exists within a larger, century-old nonprofit human service agency whose stated goal is to enhance the quality of life for residents in the surrounding community. Its parent agency, Unity, offers a variety of services to low-income community residents. These services include youth programs and foster care, as well as assistance with heating costs, medical bills, and housing. Chances has six staff members: a director, two caseworkers (one of whom doubles as a job developer), one instructor, a former caseworker turned data specialist, and a receptionist who also doubles as the director's assistant.

As noted, the state contracts impose similar requirements upon the

two welfare-to-work programs. Each program is employment focused. The contracts require welfare mothers to participate in an allowable work activity for a total of 30 weekly hours, which may include 10 hours of classroom activities and 20 hours of subsidized employment (i.e., paid work experience, community work experience) or unsubsidized employment. All clients are referred directly from the welfare offices to the programs, but there are some differences between the programs. Chances competes with similar programs for clients, but WorkOpts, the only program of its kind in Porter City, has no such competition. Any recipient in Porter City who exceeds the 5-year limit on welfare benefits must attend WorkOpts to remain eligible for benefits. In that sense, WorkOpts's bottom line has a contractual shelter.

To understand why some recipients find employment while others do not requires an assessment of the inner workings of welfare job-training programs and the service delivery process. The extent to which the recipients experience low- or high-quality service is determined in part by the organizational logics of these organizations and their allocation of resources (e.g., time with workers and access to educational and training opportunities). An agency's chief administrator plays a major role in decisions concerning how these issues are handled.

Methodology

From December 2002 to June 2004, the first author observed and collected data from WorkOpts and Chances. The data for this analysis come from 38 interviews with clients, 28 interviews with staff members (22 from WorkOpts and all six from Chances), 3 months of observations conducted 3 days a week (the first author varied the days and divided the time between the organizations), three discussion groups at each organization, administrative records, and agency publications. Interviews were conducted with individuals and with groups. The interview participants include clients as well as staff at all levels, from top-level managers to street-level bureaucrats. The participant observations occurred in orientation sessions, classrooms, lunchrooms, and lobbies. Interviews generally lasted between 60 minutes and 2 hours; the majority of interviews were tape-recorded, but some impromptu discussions were not. Most interviews took place in a private room at the organization, but several occurred at coffee shops, and one took place in a respondent's home. Organizational data include archival data, literature, and photographs.

Each transcribed interview is analyzed using ATLAS.ti software, which offers the ability to manage, extract, compare, and explore meaningful excerpts from extensive amounts of qualitative data. The authors identified broad themes and patterns in the relevant research literature and then searched the data for parallels in clients' experience of the pro-

gram, their relationships with caseworkers, and their employment outcomes. In seeking out patterns and themes within the data, the authors assessed the extent to which the presenting issues are related to broader issues of discretion and employment outcomes. Field notes as well as data from interviews with managers and supervisors are used to examine decision making about staffing and service provision. The sum of the analyses led to an exploration of the ways in which organizational factors, relationships between staff and clients, and individual staff and client attributes influence organization practices.

Structuring Performance: The Effects of State Contracts on Organizational Behavior

This analysis consists of two parts. The first part examines the specific contractual requirements under which the two programs operate. In addition to creating formal similarities across the two programs, these requirements shape the interactions between management and staff as well as between staff and clients. They also influence the allocation of resources. The contractual demands imposed by the state are largely unexamined in evaluations of welfare-to-work programs, and this study argues that such demands are critical to understanding the programs' operations. In the second part, data from the interviews and observations are employed to document how the two programs actually work.

Contractual Constraints

State performance contracts with job-training agencies specify broad requirements about the eligible client population and the percentage of clients that must find jobs. Simultaneously, contracts require these organizations to utilize a case management approach in achieving such goals. The case management approach involves the use of individual assessment to identify needs and arrange multiple services for clients. This also entails engaging clients in direct and personalized relationships. Policy makers view the approach as essential to increasing client motivation (Anderson 2001), yet contracts base agency compensation only on job-placement results. Thus, managers of welfare-to-work programs can rationally conclude that they can ignore or deemphasize case management so long as they meet the quotas for job placement. Furthermore, contracts demand that agencies find jobs for their clients but do not require the agency to address recipients' specific employment barriers, such as lack of a high school diploma or health problems; management of welfare programs may even ignore those clients' employment needs if addressing them does not specifically coincide with efforts to meet a narrowly defined job-placement goal.

However, state contracts stipulate that agencies must hire caseworkers

Table 1

SAMPLE CHARACTERISTICS BY PROGRAM

	National*	WorkOpts	Chances
Race (%):			
Black	39	77 (10)	100 (9)
White	34	8 (1)	0
Hispanic or Latina	22	15 (2)	0
Marital status (%):			
Single or never married	66	100 (13)	100 (9)
Ever married	22	0	0
Prior work experience		92 (13)	100 (9)
Average no. of years on welfare	2†	11	6
Age:			
25 years or younger		77 (10)	50 (4)
26 years or older		23 (3)	50 (4)
Average age (years)	31	33	30
Average no. of children	2	5	2
Average no. of children < age 13		3	2
Education (%):			
Less than high school	46	69 (9)	22 (2)
High school graduate or GED	48	31 (4)	67 (6)
Post–high school		0	11 (1)
Transportation (% no car)	30‡	90 (10)	100 (7)
Health problems (%):			
Mother has work disability		55 (6)	
Child with health problem	16	18 (2)	29 (2)
Mental health problems	4	45 (5)	14 (1)
Criminal background		27 (3)	14 (1)
Domestic violence	25§	18 (2)	
Child care problems		60 (6)	25 (2)
Employed	25	15 (2)	67 (6)
No. of employment barriers		3	2

NOTE.—GED = general equivalency diploma. The number of participants is indicated in parentheses.

* Except as noted, national results are derived from US Department of Health and Human Services (2007).

† Harris (1996).

‡ Pavetti (1995).

§ Tjaden and Thoennes (2000).

and other frontline staff with social work training. Staff stated that they expected to provide case management services that deal with barriers to employment. If management emphasizes job placement at the expense of case management, management may clash with staff, and the conflict may impair job-placement efforts as well as case management. If management underfunds or provides only token programs to reduce barriers to employment, staff may find themselves trying to place clients in jobs for which the individuals lack necessary skills or unable to find jobs that match the skills their clients have.

Table 1 illustrates differences between the populations served by the two programs. Compared with Chances' clients, WorkOpts's clients report more welfare experience over their lifetime (5 years more on average), are somewhat older, have larger families, possess less education,

report more physical and mental problems, are more likely to report child-care difficulties, and are more racially diverse.[8] The table shows that WorkOpts's clients face greater barriers than do Chances' clients. However, the clienteles are similar in reported percentages for prior work experience and transportation (i.e., access to a car). Carolyn Adams and colleagues (2008) find that access to a car is a vital factor in obtaining employment in cities like Porter City because the public transportation system is limited.

The differences between the two sets of clients are reflected in each organization's contract with the state and in the criteria specified as indicators of adequate performance. Table 2 describes the terms of the major features of the two agencies contracts. In terms of day-to-day operations, each contract's most meaningful performance requirement is the percentage of clients the program is required to place in jobs each year: it is 10 percent for WorkOpts and 55 percent for Chances. Further, a placement is only counted toward that requirement if it lasts for a specified period (90 days for WorkOpts; 180 days for Chances). The WorkOpts contract does not include a minimum pay requirement but specifies that WorkOpts placements count toward the performance goal whether or not clients are placed in full-time jobs. Chances must place its clients in jobs that pay at least $6.50 an hour, and the contract allows the organization to count both full- and part-time placements toward the performance requirement.

To meet these goals, WorkOpts operates with an annual budget of $3,000,000 and must serve 1,200 clients per year; Chances has a budget of $680,000 and must serve 150 clients. In practice, WorkOpts serves 100 per month (1,200 per year), on average, and Chances services 25 (300 per year). Thus, WorkOpts spends an annual average of $2,500 per client, and Chances spends $2,267. Although WorkOpts has more difficult clients, its annualized average allocation per client is 110 percent of the annual average allocation by Chances.

Both contracts specify the eligible client population and referral process. Barred from rejecting any referred client, WorkOpts is required to accept welfare recipients who have been on welfare for more than 5 years (described as extended TANF) from every welfare district in Porter City. Chances, however, receives clients who have been on welfare less than 2 years (described as pre-24 months) and those who have been on welfare more than 2 years but less than 5 (described as post-24 months).

8. Two clients raise Chances' average concerning years of prior welfare experience. One client reported that she received welfare for 13 years in another state. Because she reported working for the 8 years prior to seeking benefits through the Chances program, Chances did not consider her to be a post-24 client. The state granted the other client a special dispensation, although he reportedly received welfare for over 18 years. The label "post-24 months" means that the client is considered a long-term welfare recipient and thus is not eligible to attend Chances and instead must attend the WorkOpts program.

Table 2

CONTRACT TERMS

Program Feature	WorkOpts	Chances
Focus of program	Employment placement in full-time unsubsidized jobs	Employment placement in full- or part-time unsubsidized jobs
Type of contract	Performance based: Agency is required to place 10% of its clients into jobs Agency is paid a set amount when placement percentage is achieved at end of the month	Billable, fixed price with performance outcomes: Agency is required to place 55% of its clients into jobs Agency bills the government monthly; fees based on the number of clients it places in a job
Employment time line	Client employment must last at least 90 days	Client employment must last at least 180 days
Contractually defined eligible welfare clients	Extended TANF (i.e., those on welfare 5 years or more)	All client types, divided into 2 groups: Recipients for 0–2 years considered pre-24 Recipients 2–5 years considered post-24
Source of clients	Referred from welfare department	Referred from welfare department
Origin of clients	Entire city	Only districts in the vicinity of the program's location
Mandated maximum case management caseload	No more than 35 clients per caseworker	No more than 35 clients per caseworker
No. of clients required to serve annually	1,200	150
Contract cost ($)	3,000,000	680,000
Cost per client ($)	2,500	2,267
Required wage for work training ($)	5.15 (for eligible clients)	5.15 (for all post-24 clients)
Minimum average wage required for placement ($)	None	6.50
Work site intermediary	Required	None
Contract length	1 year, renewable	1 year, renewable

NOTE.—TANF = Temporary Assistance for Needy Families program.

Chances clients come from welfare districts in its surrounding neighborhoods. Both contracts mandate that all clients receive case management services, and state guidelines specify that caseload size should not exceed 35 clients per caseworker. The contracts do not explicitly require staff to perform other services, such as providing basic education or finding jobs for clients, but they do stipulate the types of work services that clients must receive.

All recipients in Porter City are assigned to perform 30 hours of eligible work activities. For those recipients who have received welfare for more than 2 years, 20 hours of the total 30 hours must be on-the-job training at designated work sites, which are state-approved agencies. In Porter City, welfare-to-work training programs select a client's assignment from a list of these work sites. The state considers these assignments on-the-job training, and the client must work the assigned hours in order to remain in compliance with the state's welfare regulations.

For clients at WorkOpts, the 30-hour work requirement is divided into 20 hours of on-the-job training (whether paid or unpaid) and 10 hours of job-readiness activities at a nonprofit human services agency (also referred to as a work site); these efforts are intended to inculcate a strong work ethic and proper workplace behaviors.[9] Chances' clients who have received welfare for fewer than 24 months are not obligated to participate in on-the-job training and may devote all 30 hours of weekly work activity to independent job searches. Like those at WorkOpts, Chances' clients who have been on welfare for more than 2 years (described as post-24 clients) are mandated to work 20 hours of on-the-job training; in exchange for this work, clients receive the minimum wage.[10] Their additional 10 hours are spent in either classroom activities or independent job searches.

The contracts also dictate some of the conditions under which client services are implemented. Built into the WorkOpts contract is a provision for a subcontract with The Mission, a nonprofit agency whose main

9. In Porter City, the nature of job-readiness activities can vary widely. WorkOpts attempts to prepare clients for work with what are called wraparound activities. These include classroom lectures about the job search process; however, WorkOpts case managers may give some clients permission to spend this time filling out job applications in independent job searches. At Chances, job-readiness activities vary depending on welfare status. All clients participate in classroom-based job-readiness activities, which are similar to those at WorkOpts. Clients who have been on welfare for more than 2 years are allowed to use their 20 hours of on-the-job training time for educational services as well as independent job searches.

10. The federal TANF grant to states provides funds for stipends, and wages for each worker in these nonprofit assignments are paid from his or her stipend. A worker may receive wages from the stipend for no more than 6 months. Clients who use up this 6-month federal allotment are assigned to work sites but do not earn wages. A typical client at Chances has not used up his or her federal stipend (and therefore receives wages), but a substantial number of WorkOpts's clients exhaust their stipend. This is perfectly understandable given the average length of time that WorkOpts clients are on welfare.

responsibility is to identify appropriate work sites where clients can complete their on-the-job training. The contract requires Chances to adhere to similar rules about work activities but allows the organization to choose its own work site intermediary. Because Chances is part of a larger, nonprofit human-service agency, it chooses to keep this service in-house; Unity, its parent company, serves as the main work site location for Chances clients.

Contractual Constraints, Profit Motives, and Performance

Although both WorkOpts and Chances face similar contractual obligations, the aforementioned ambiguities and contradictions provide each with latitude in meeting those obligations. The role of management and differences in organizational logics become critical in navigating within this latitude. Headly, WorkOpts's corporate parent, created a management structure and sought to impose an organizational logic and culture based on its need for profitability. At the same time, it is required to do case management in order to remove employment barriers. Although case management offers the potential for success over the long term, emphasizing case management services could delay placements in the short term. As the analysis suggests, tension between these two requirements creates conflict between management and staff as well as between staff and clients. Ultimately, the conflict undermines WorkOpts's ability to place clients. In contrast, Chances, as a nonprofit organization, has a legal obligation to operate on behalf of the public good. In this particular case, Chances attended to the goals of its organizational mission as well as to the contract, though not all nonprofits do so. Thus, Chances adopted a more balanced strategy that enables the organization to surpass its contractual obligations.

The WorkOpts experience.—The WorkOpts demonstration project began with 30 staff members and 60 clients, many of whom received welfare for fewer than 5 years and had few employment barriers (Johnson 2005). Each of the caseworkers had only 12 clients and so could tailor case management to individual clients' needs. After 4.5 months, its executives negotiated the larger contract for the quite different set of clients described here. In interviews, neither the executives at Headly nor WorkOpts's organizational management acknowledged that the organizational structure and operational strategy of the demonstration project differed from those deployed in the new organization's efforts to fulfill its state contract. Staff and the program manager stated that the new contract required WorkOpts to train and place a considerably larger number of clients who are more difficult to serve than those served in the demonstration project. In practice, WorkOpts moved from serving 12 clients per month to serving 100 (roughly three times the demonstration project's contractual maximum). Moreover, the majority of the

new clients were unable to read at the seventh-grade level, and more than a quarter had a criminal record. Yet, management did not to hire additional staff or provide additional services for these new clients. As one manager put it, staff needed to abandon the "social work" model in favor of what he termed a welfare style of case management (Johnson 2005, 106). His comment implies that WorkOpts needed staff to take fast-paced action to meet the immediate and short-term results that the welfare contract demanded.

Some managers recognize the conflict between quality of service and the number of clients the program serves. As one put it, "Quantity reduces the quality of what we can do" (Johnson 2005, 112). With so many clients to serve, staff reported that they simply do not have the time to develop individual relationships. Responding to the time-pressured environment, one caseworker stated: "You've got like maybe 10 minutes for each participant, sometimes less than that; so basically the relationship is really bad.I mean you don't have time. I wouldn't use the word 'relationship' because you don't have any relationship; you just fill out the papers [and] ask basic questions" (107).

Staff reported that they are regularly unable to recall clients' names. When forced to deal with those clients directly, they kindly ask the client to say her name. Clients who understand the workers' dilemma respond by restating their names, but some just walk away, hissing through their teeth.

Although the contract requires case management services, it neither details their content nor sets standards of quality. During orientation sessions, WorkOpts staff would tell clients that they will have a chance to earn their GED, get their driver's license, and learn computer skills, but none of these things happens. WorkOpts has a computer lab but no instructor to teach recipients typing or computer skills. The computer lab is simply for job searches. In the end, the WorkOpts effort does not lead to much improvement in recipients' skills set. Clients are simply to find a job, any job.

WorkOpts's training did not match clients' employment needs. Clients reported particular distress about job-readiness classes, reducing stress or increasing motivation, and the lack of classes offering practical job skills or a GED. Despite the fact that more than a quarter of the clients have a criminal record, WorkOpts offers them no help in dealing with the obvious difficulties they encounter in searching for a job (Johnson 2005).

Headly also often underestimates the importance of and need for adequate leadership in its management team. For example, Headly promoted an inexperienced staff member from one of the company's other programs to become a program manager of WorkOpts. Recognizing the new program manager's inexperience, Headly's executives substantially limited his managerial discretion, and Headly's regional director spent

part of each week at WorkOpts to supervise the activities of both the program manager and his staff.

The effort was counterproductive. When the regional director was in the office, the atmosphere tensed, and she often quarreled with managers as well as staff. Some staff indicated that she undermined her program manager; one commented: "I think that [the program manager] is very skilled. . . . I actually have some hope about that, but he is so undercut" (Johnson 2005, 130). When it appeared that job placements were falling behind contractual requirements, the regional director severely criticized the job developers whose primary task was to find unsubsidized employment for clients. Such encounters were usually public and loud, and often they only added fuel to an already raging fire. According to one job developer:

> I was approached by [the regional director] who mentioned that she thought I was not a good job developer, and when I asked her to clarify that, she said the numbers were really low and that proved that I was bad job developer. . . . [She said] I'm too much of a purist; that job development is a dog-eat-dog profession and that I just wasn't cut out for it. . . . She literally yelled at me when I tried to justify some of the reasons for the low number [and said] I care too much about the clients and I'm thinking, "Well isn't that why you hired me in the first place?" (Johnson 2005, 103)

This recurring problem escalated into an organizational crisis. Shortly after this public and heated conversation with the regional director, the job developer and a colleague resigned from their jobs, indicating that disagreement with management's singular focus on placements was a major reason for their departure. The resignation of these two employees, the most highly educated and experienced, left the division understaffed. As a result, caseloads increased for a remaining staff generally perceived within the organization to be incompetent or poorly trained. One month after the departure of these employees, a high-ranking manager also resigned. She strongly empathized with clients. Like the two who resigned before her, she cited management's tunnel vision and disregard for clients' long-term interests as reasons for her resignation. Before she left, she gave a teary-eyed testimonial about her displeasure with the company:

> We are just another welfare-to-work. WorkOpts, a for-profit . . . the company gets $12,000 for every participant we can get to stay in a job for 90 days . . . and guess what the jobs are, wiping the shit off of old people's butts in nursing homes, they are cleaning toilets at the vet, what am I doing . . . like why am I working here? They pay me $40,000. We are not helping anybody. It's horrible; I hate it. I think we [case managers] try really hard to make the program mean something. We had motivational speakers—we were doing something that was meaningful . . . and the clients told us when I did my little evaluation every Friday that this was different, that they didn't just feel like they were another

hot dog being processed in the chute. Now I am now—I am almost embarrassed to work here. (Johnson 2005, 104)

The program manager also recognized his lack of qualifications for his job. Six months after taking the job, he still found it difficult to make decisions. In the interviews he reported feeling unsure about the course of action that would make the program a success; therefore, he opted for a hands-off approach, referring managerial decisions to his superiors: "I guess that we can—I have—some flexibility to say, 'Well I think that the case-management unit would perhaps run better this way.' [Should a decision need to be made], I'd bring it to the powers that be [executive management] and they'll decide whether they want to give that a shot or not" (Johnson 2005, 131–32). Uncertain about what decisions he could make, he did very little to address issues or improve the program. As one staffer put it, "He's as sweet as he can be and a really nice man, but he can't do the job" (130). Unwilling to take a risk and exercise any discretion in changing the course of the program, the program manager's inaction permitted the chaos.

Aside from the issues of adequate staff size and competent management, frontline staff and management work from different perspectives. In interviews, staff expressed the belief that the program should pay greater attention to the clients' employment barriers; staff indicated that management simply seeks placements at the lowest possible cost. The resulting conflict produces staff turnover and hampers client placements. One manager at WorkOpts summarized the conflict between management and staff this way: "This type of [welfare] industry requires fast-paced thinking, quick thinking, effective thinking, resourcefulness. . . . [In] traditional social work, there is a process in working with a client. There are expectations and rules and regulations and that is also in the welfare industry. But there isn't that immediacy as much as the immediacy of resolving issues that are faced within the welfare industry" (Johnson 2005, 100).

Caseworkers, like managers, state that time is at a premium. They also want to achieve the goals of the program but resent the hurried conditions under which they are asked to work. Echoing the sentiment of her peers, one caseworker said:

[The] difference I've seen with this program [rather] than other programs I've been [a part of], is the speed in which you have to get somebody from point A to point B. Well as soon as they come in, we have a limited amount of time, you know, with the person . . . it's gotta be fast. To me, they're [management] looking for results here. "How many placements did you get? What were the results?" It's like, almost like a statistical thing. They're worried about statistics, where from our end we see it as, "Okay, it's not just statistics." (Johnson 2005, 101)

A pervasive dichotomy persists between frontline staff who "cared too much" and managers who are interested in the "numbers" (Johnson 2005, 103). In addition to the pressure it places on caseworkers, management makes tremendous demands of the job developers, who are primarily responsible for linking recipients to unsubsidized jobs. If the numbers are low, management looks specifically to job developers for answers.

WorkOpts's decision to subcontract with The Mission contributes further to its problems. Although WorkOpts requires The Mission to match jobs at work sites with clients' interests, experience, and skills, it rarely does so nor does it provide any supervision of the work done. In interviews, clients reported that work site supervisors sometimes take advantage of the fact that recipients are required to work in order to receive benefits, putting clients in dangerous jobs or seeking sexual favors as a condition of employment. Clients reported that when they complain to WorkOpts management about the services they receive from The Mission, there is no responsive action (Johnson 2005). Several reports of such issues were made to the case management director. These included clients' accounts of having to perform fellatio in exchange for work hours and of having nude pictures taken of them. In an interview, the program manager reported that he witnessed these incidents but did nothing to address such complaints.

The contractual obligation to serve extended TANF recipients and to provide them with case management services makes it difficult for WorkOpts to satisfy its legal commitments and to address clients' employment needs. Because WorkOpts devotes few resources to its hard-to-serve population, the program is ill-equipped to address clients' needs, and many clients remain unemployed. In following an organizational logic that places profit above services to improve clients' job prospects, WorkOpts undermines its ability to meet its contractual obligations for job placements. However, the organization made its required 10 percent placement requirement by placing some of the clients with its corporate parent, and its placements pay minimum wage.

The Chances experience.—Chances works with far fewer clients than WorkOpts. Those clients tend to be better educated and to have fewer employment barriers than their counterparts at WorkOpts, but these advantages are not enough to guarantee success. Chances' manager reported in the interview that, during its first year, Chances failed to place even half the number of clients that its contract mandated, and the jobs it found for clients did not meet the required hourly minimum wage. Chances was in danger of losing its contract.

According to the newly hired manager, the response of Chances' parent organization, Unity, was to change the leadership. Unity replaced the program's executive director with an individual who holds an MBA in health administration and is committed to helping his community.

Unity gave him broad discretion to change the program. He reorganized the staff and dismissed two staff members "who were not reaching beyond the local community to help participants find quality jobs that would improve their lives" (Johnson 2005, 169). He reported that he reassigned two others to make better use of their skills. Recognizing the program's tenuous position with its state contracting agency, he strengthened the relationship by bringing the agency's monitor in to train his staff about state guidelines and mandates. He also created strong communication and accountability systems that focus on clients' needs.

Of the six staff members, two case managers provide case management services, job outreach, and placement. They also serve as liaisons to the welfare office. On occasion, they accompany clients to job interviews and conduct home visits. Although Chances clients are assigned to work sites in the same facility as the Chances program, the new executive director seeks to control the quality of the training experience. One case manager also doubles as the classroom instructor. To ensure that clients receive job training and that Unity staff members do not exploit clients, the executive director assigned one of the case managers to also serve as the work site liaison between Chances and other Unity programs where clients are placed. The executive director also developed procedures to create shared responsibility between Unity staff and the Chances program. He works with Unity staff to create a collaborative relationship among clients, caseworkers, and job trainers.

In keeping with the director's philosophy that clients come first, he promotes a client-centered culture and encourages staff to go to extraordinary lengths to help clients succeed. It is common practice for caseworkers to transport clients to job interviews. Equally common are clothing drives in which employees contribute children's clothes and adult attire appropriate for interviews. Although these actions are not prescribed in their job responsibilities, all staff members participate, demonstrating their shared commitment to supporting clients.

At WorkOpts, the relationship between managers and staff is defined by conflict over the best interests of clients. Such conflict is not observed at Chances. At WorkOpts, staff vehemently disagree with the profit-making goals, reporting that it conflicts with client's needs. Chances' director reconciled these issues: "I remember the upper administration at that time kept hammering us with the numbers. 'Got to meet the numbers, got to meet the numbers.' We decided collectively 'to hell with the numbers.' We said, 'This is about people's lives.' Any of us could have lost our job. . . . Yes, we know the numbers are important but you know what's more important? Working with people and helping them in their lives. So we've sort of committed ourselves to say it's not about the numbers. Those numbers will fall in line, but is about helping people" (Johnson 2005, 172). Although WorkOpts never reconciled

these differences, Chances' director demonstrated to his staff that he shares their common interests and by his actions gained their trust.

When staff approached the director about their perceived need for improvements to computer instruction and facilities for clients, he juggled finances to free funds for a part-time instructor, wrote a grant to secure funding for 30 new computers, and won that grant. When staff conveyed clients' request for a GED program, the director and the case managers worked with outside partners to provide it, though Chances has no contractual obligation to offer the program.

WorkOpts does not communicate with or provide any training for its work site partners, but Chances takes a different approach:

> We actually pull together all the managers from the various departments and did a training on paid work experience. We talked about the obligation. We talked about the job descriptions that each department had given to us previously. [We] asked them to update those job descriptions. . . . We talked to them about . . . what individual [client] should or should not be doing, the number of hours they should be working. They're not there to serve individuals. . . . They're there to get experience, some time of work experience while they provide the services. There's an individual . . . assigned to . . . go check . . . periodically on the progress and talk with those supervisors or those directors on the progress of the participants in our program. (Johnson 2005, 171)

This collaboration provides oversight and ensures that Chances clients are not abused.

In contrast to WorkOpts, Chances gives staff flexibility in dealing with clients' issues. The director indicates that he sees such flexibility as positive. When discussing a new instructor he hired, he commented:

> He's younger and he's creative in his mindset. . . . It's almost like going from a classroom where the teacher has been there for 100 years and she does everything the same for 100 years. . . . [Y]ou get these new jacks and they can pull ideas from here, here, and here, conceptualize it, and then present it. And I think [the instructor] is a new jack. He can touch people and sometimes it might not be necessarily seem as structured or as organized but I think that's how it is. I think that is the new way of teaching. Everybody doesn't just sit there with their hands folded and raise their hands. We are talking about adults coming together from a variety of different backgrounds, from a variety of experiences and I think [the instructor] has been able to reach out to them. (Johnson 2005, 169)

By balancing the state's contractual demands for job placement and case management, Chances succeeds where WorkOpts does not. During the year of fieldwork, Chances placed 74 percent of its clients in full-time jobs that earned an average hourly wage of $8.08; both figures are well above its contractual obligations. Eighty-one percent of the jobs also provide health benefits.[11]

11. Data on health benefits are not available for WorkOpts.

It is easy to think that Chances' transformation is simply a function of the quality of leadership provided by the new director, but the organizational logic of the nonprofit context in which he operates is critical to his success. Unity exists to serve the needs of its community. It is important to recall that Chances' director had the full support of Unity; Unity's board endorsed his internal organizational changes and provides all of the work sites in which clients train.

Conclusion

This research suggests that performance contracts constrain the behaviors of workers in social service delivery but leave substantial latitude for variation in program operations and service provision. In this study, the differences between the two organizations in the effects of the state contracts on client outcomes are shaped in large part by the distinct organizational logics of these two organizations and through leadership responses to the contractual demands. Although WorkOpts and Chances are contractually mandated to provide similar services (job-readiness classes, job counseling, educational classes or referral to such classes, on-the-job training, and job placement), those mandates do not ensure similar organizational processes and outcomes; the results differ materially. During this study period, Chances trained and placed more of its clients into employment than WorkOpts did. Although the Chances client populations differ substantially from the population served by WorkOpts (i.e., Chances' clients are younger; possess more education; and have fewer employment barriers, such as inadequate education, criminal records, day care needs, and health issues), these advantages do not ensure Chances' success.

This study argues that leadership is a crucial linchpin in the welfare-to-work process. The Chances example demonstrates the import and influence of managerial behavior. The program primarily succeeded after Chances' parent organization replaced its old leadership; the new director revamped its structure, brought in the state monitor to train staff, replaced staff, and modified the organization to meet organizational goals as well as contractual requirements. Chances created a structure and processes that, although grossly similar to those at WorkOpts, have a different operating logic. Coupled with the different leadership style, these features enable Chances to produce better employment outcomes than those at WorkOpts.

Differences between the organizational logic of for-profit programs and that of nonprofit programs place the actions of the agencies' leaders within substantially different structural contexts. During its demonstration period, WorkOpts provided a broad range of services in meeting its contractually mandated placements. However, with the completion of the demonstration period, the start of a new contract, and the arrival

of new clients, WorkOpts began to withdraw services and focus almost entirely on the short-run goal of making job placements. The conflict between managers and staff at WorkOpts signals that its profit-making objectives take precedence over service delivery and clients' goals. It is important to note that WorkOpts was able to reduce its services because its state contract monitor did not press the organization to behave differently. In contrast, changes made at Chances focus the organization on clients' long-term goals.

Staff in the two programs have similar educational backgrounds and social work experience. One might thus expect the organizations to have similar organizational structures and processes, but they do not. During the study period, neither program had a staff member with a postgraduate degree; bachelor's degrees were standard. The staff also are quite comparable in work experience (i.e., multiple years in public social services) and in orientation toward assisting clients. Thus, one might expect the two organizations to have similar organizational processes, but they do not.

Chances succeeded where WorkOpts failed because the organizational logics at Chances provide the structure for success and the leadership responded accordingly. WorkOpts's organizational form led the program to focus on short-term measures; poor leadership led to program chaos and low employment outcomes. James Heckman and Jeffrey Smith (1998) find similar results in their study; the use of contract performance incentives produces a perverse relationship between clients' short-term (earnings) and long-run (employment) outcomes.

In addition, this study argues that the particular incentive structures of each organization couple with managerial behavior to shape intraorganizational processes and clients' outcomes. Faced with state contracts to meet conflicting performance objectives, the for-profit firm, Headly, and the nonprofit organization, Unity, chose quite different managerial objectives for their programs and pursued quite different paths. Nondistributional constraints on the nonprofit provide an important pretext for staying focused on client outcomes (Heinrich 2000). The for-profit agency's commercial business model imposes different sorts of constraints. It is not always the case that nonprofits focus on the social good or that for-profits concentrate on profit motives, but those underlying organizational logics are found to operate in this analysis. Thus, the current study provides a tale of caution as well as some support for the critiques of the privatization model. The findings do not indicate whether private sector delivery of welfare-to-work services is good or bad (Nightingale and Pindus 1997; Seidenstat 1999; Sanger 2003). Rather, the results suggest that success is contingent on several factors, and leadership is primary among them; the study finds that performance contracts do not inherently limit gains for clients but that the combination of the organizational context, distorted incentive structures, and

poor leadership can produce unintended consequences for clients. In designing these programs, policy makers should pay greater attention to long-term performance standards for the postprogram period.

Some argue that the competitive private market will deliver services of higher quality and at lower cost than those provided by government, but research shows that may not always be the case (Heinrich 2000; Sloan et al. 2001). Making a profit is a primary objective among for-profit companies, and, if the company is publicly traded, it is likely to be the prime objective. Publicly traded companies face quarterly expectations for increasing profits. If these expectations are not met, they can expect a penalty in their share prices, and the costs of operation rise. As Steven Smith (2010, 148) notes, for-profit companies in human services may be more likely than their nonprofit counterparts to provide a very minimal level of service. In contrast, nonprofit organizations exist to perform service missions, lack the same pressures to increase surpluses (i.e., profits), and must spend any surplus on the organization's service objectives. Moreover, because they must meet requirements to retain tax-exempt status, nonprofits may be more likely than for-profits to focus on service objectives.

The study also provides evidence that organizations are able to modify their environments by becoming proactively political, and objectors to the privatization model raise concerns about this (Smith and Lipsky 1993; Wallin 2001; Kelleher and Yackee 2009). Although the director of Chances did not engage in electoral politics to bolster his agency, his successful effort to involve the agency monitor in training staff undoubtedly diminishes the likelihood that the state will terminate the contract. Nicole Marwell (2004) finds that these actions can bode well for improving the position of agencies and their programs.

This study has several limitations. It examines two private welfare-to-work organizations in one city in one state. The evidence presented here suggests that differences between for-profit and nonprofit agencies lead to differences in leadership action, organizational processes, and organizational outcomes; variation in these organizational types may, in different states with different kinds of contracts and contractual supervision, lead to different outcomes. As the study notes, some argue that performance contracting forces nonprofit and for-profit organizations to select similar strategies to meet contractual requirements and, consequently, that differences between the two types of organizations will diminish. This study, although limited in size and the number of sites, suggests that the distinction between for-profit and nonprofit orientation remains vital in social service delivery.

The authors acknowledge that this portrayal describes the Chances organization favorably and that nonprofit service providers fall along a broad continuum between excellent providers and just passable ones. However, placing Chances' success within the broader arena of social

services is beyond the scope of this study. Finally, the article argues that Chances' nonprofit orientation is more successful than WorkOpts's for-profit orientation at achieving the service goal of placing welfare recipients into work, but the authors also acknowledge the role that the difficult client population may play in WorkOpts's failure to make its placement goals.

Future research should investigate the extent to which managerial behavior shapes constraints on organizations operating under government contracts (including constraints related to client population) and whether constraints impose similarities of structure and process. As Hasenfeld (2000) and Sandfort (2010) find, research must look beyond the formal similarities created by contractual obligations, competitive pressures, or environmental restrictions to ask how, in practice, organizations adapt to these homogenizing constraints. The work reported here suggests the possibility of considerable variation. Some of this variation may be rooted in differences in organizational objectives.

Note

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Book Reviews

Defining Deviance: Sex, Science, and Delinquent Girls, 1890–1960. By Michael A. Rembis. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2011. Pp. 248. $50.00 (cloth).

Defining Deviance is the latest historical monograph to analyze adolescent girls and women who were incarcerated in Illinois reformatories or prisons during the twentieth century. It builds, for example, on Anne Meis Knupfer's *Reform and Resistance: Gender, Delinquency, and America's First Juvenile Court* (New York: Routledge, 2001) and L. Mara Dodge's *"Whores and Thieves of the Worst Kind": A Study of Women, Crime, and Prisons, 1835–2000* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 2002). It is, however, the first historical study of female juvenile delinquency in the United States to be written from the perspective of the new field of disability studies. Troubled by the rise of mental "disorders" and "proliferation of diagnostic categories" (146) in the past 25 years, its author, Michael Rembis, associate director of the Disability Studies Program at the University of Buffalo, asserts that disability history can help one to "rethink the social and cultural work of defining deviance and analyze the creation of scientific 'truths' within a specific social and historical context" (147). Rembis thus uses the past to start a conversation about the future.

Rembis begins this "history of the social construction of impairment" (4) by describing the successful culmination in 1915 of a 20-year campaign in Illinois to pass a eugenic commitment law. Rembis first demonstrates the role of women reformers in championing the legislation and popularizing the idea of eugenics in American thought and culture during the Progressive Era. He then analyzes how adolescent girls became a target for reformers who used psy discourses (i.e., eugenics, psychology, psychiatry) to equate delinquent behavior with mental illness or deviance. As he explains, "The critical difference between the nineteenth-century 'fallen women' and the delinquent daughter of the early twentieth century rested not necessarily in a rearticulation of young women's heterosexual agency, but rather in a new conceptualization of the mental impairment that supposedly lay at the root of their misconduct" (45). He adds, "By classifying female delinquents as inherently flawed, women reformers simultaneously highlighted their vulnerability and the potentially biologically hazardous implications of their actions" (45). Such biological explanations for delinquency continued into the 1920s and 1930s and led to girls being indefinitely incarcerated. By 1940, he reports, the state had institutionalized approximately 39,000 people.

Thanks to the important work of Michael Willrich, the history of eugenic jurisprudence in early twentieth-century Illinois is already well known (*City of Courts: Socializing Justice in Progressive Era Chicago* [New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003]). Rembis, in fact, confirms many of Willrich's findings about

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how reformers often blended eugenics and environmentalism in defining and responding to crime in the Progressive Era. However, Rembis moves beyond Willrich's focus on the municipal court system to analyze how experts diagnosed girls at the State Training School for Girls in Geneva, during formal exams and by evaluating their overall behavior as inmates. Rembis contends that the girls had some control over their lives but argues that historians like Knupfer romanticize their resistance to reform. Psychotherapist Steven Levenkron's book, *Cutting: Understanding and Overcoming Self-Mutilation* (New York: Norton, 1998), prompts Rembis to contend that the abuse and neglect these girls endured as children already deeply scarred them. He suggests that their experiences often led them to engage in self-destructive and violent behavior.

The most important contribution of Rembis's study is his chapter on the 1940s and 1950s. In it he explains and contextualizes the end of eugenic commitments in Illinois. Rembis explains that, during this period, experts shifted "away from a biological theory of delinquency to a psychoanalytic or personality theory of delinquency" (120) and "no longer considered juvenile delinquents by definition 'feebleminded' or mentally 'defective'" (140). The chapter's strength lies in how well it demonstrates that the rise of personality theories, such as Freudianism, informed how experts diagnosed delinquency in Illinois. Rembis also argues that the American rejection of eugenics after World War II was the cumulative process of "decades of scientific research," not a sudden reaction to the Nazis' use of eugenics to justify the Final Solution (127).

The book ends on a discordant note. "Rather than dismiss or deny the existence of impairment, disease, or disorder," Rembis declares, "disability scholars need to meet these accusations head on; we must document and trace the genealogy of modern definitions of mental deviance, all the while remaining sensitive to the specific social and historical contexts from which modern-day 'defective delinquents' emerge" (147). He then praises Barry Feld for beginning this dialogue. Feld is a leading scholar of juvenile justice who has recently written about the treatment of delinquent girls. This is an odd conclusion because Rembis largely ignores the interdisciplinary literature on juvenile justice. He could have used classic studies, such as Paul Tappan's *Delinquent Girls in Court: A Study of the Wayward Minor Court of New York* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1947), to point out scholars who note that juvenile delinquency, especially female delinquency, is a legal construct. It is also surprising that he did not even cite the classic study of the Chicago juvenile court as an instrument of social control (Anthony Platt, *The Child Savers: The Invention of Delinquency*, 2nd ed. [Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1977]), especially since Platt singles out the role of middle-class women reformers, such as Jane Addams. Rembis could also do much more with the comparative literature on female juvenile delinquency, such as Tamara Myers's *Caught: Montreal's Modern Girls and the Law, 1869–1945* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2006). Finally, he could have addressed the published works of the MacArthur Foundation Research Network on Adolescent Development and Juvenile Justice. Examples include Tom Grisso's *Double Jeopardy: Adolescent Offenders with Mental Disorders* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004), Franklin Zimring's *An American Travesty: Legal Response to Adolescent Sexual Offending* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004), and Jane Sprott and Anthony Doob's *Justice for Girls? Stability and Change in the Youth Justice Systems of the United States and Canada* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009). Although *Defining Deviance* could have done much more with the interdisciplinary literature on juvenile justice, scholars of social welfare will find this concise book worthwhile because it brings to life new material

on the policing of adolescent female sexuality and provides a new perspective on the rise of the therapeutic state.

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Hobos, Hustlers, and Backsliders: Homeless in San Francisco. By Teresa Gowan. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2010. Pp. 368. $75.00 (cloth); $24.95 (paper).

This is an illuminating and superbly written book about a segment of the homeless population in San Francisco. It evolved from a case study of mainly homeless recyclers to an ethnographic discourse analysis of the homeless men embedded in several of the city's different homeless subcultures. The ethnographic discourse analysis focuses on "how competing discourses on poverty and homelessness" (xx) are used by the homeless to make sense of their own existence. These causal accounts cluster into three "discursive logics," and it is argued that each "lends coherence, authority, and legitimacy to everyday speech and practices within the field of homelessness" (xxi). These discursive logics, or causal accounts, include sin-talk, sick-talk, and system-talk, each of which narrativizes poverty and homelessness in terms of a different cause and management strategy or remedy. Thus, sin-talkers discuss homelessness as a moral offense that warrants punishment and exclusion or banishment as a strategic response; the individual is cast as the locus of blame. Sick-talkers' discourse regards homelessness as a pathology or sickness that calls for treatment; blame falls on the individual, particularly on his or her biological imperfections. System-talkers attribute causal blame to the encompassing social structure and to its imperfections; they thus call for corresponding structural changes and regulations as the appropriate strategic response.

Analytically, Teresa Gowan does much more than provide a descriptively compelling rendering of the causal accounting practices of the homeless. She also situates the three contradictory strands of discourse spatially or subculturally across different clusters of homeless hanging out in different places in the city. The sin-talkers, for example, tend be clustered in the city's Tenderloin District, which is heavily populated by ex-cons; the sick-talkers are overrepresented in the city's transitional shelters and rehab programs; and the system-talkers predominate among the homeless bottle and can recyclers living in their encampments away for the Tenderloin and the city center. But the contextualization of these strands of causal, sense-making discourse does not stop with their spatial and subcultural distribution within the city; these discourses are also linked to welfare-related changes in governmental positions and policies. In particular, they are tied to federal-, state-, and city-level changes in social entitlements and social control during the past 30 years. So the author finds that homelessness is not only linked to socioeconomic, material conditions across the American landscape, as have other homelessness researchers, but that there is also a strong discursive connection to these broad and historic changes.

The book begins with an introduction to three of Gowan's core "research companions" (she prefers this relational identifier to the more commonly used term, "informant," because her companions "would hate the snitching tone" of "informant" [9]), each of whom articulates in his own words one of the three strands of causal talk. With this setup of the book's major analytic problem,

Gowan begins shifting toward high gear, first with a discussion of the project's development and the rationale for the focus on homeless discourse. She follows this with a useful and insightful overview of the discourse on and management of homelessness in the United States. These first two chapters comprise part 1 of the book, called "Backstories." Part 2 takes the reader into "The Street"; it ventures onto the sidewalks and into the alleys and encampments where Gowan's homeless companions live and carve out their varied lifestyles. The three chapters that comprise this section describe the different spaces and subcultures into which the homeless separate themselves, identifying the survival strategies that correspond with each; elaborate the ways in which the homeless men use the dominant discourses to make sense of their everyday lives and the general stigma of homelessness; and provide a vivid portrait of the recycler's subculture. In the book's final section, titled "Rabble Management," Gowan tracks some of her homeless companions into the city's mixed shelter system. The settings range from emergency, warehouse-like shelters to service-rich facilities geared toward therapeutic intervention. She then takes up the city's efforts to control and revitalize the streets by removing the homeless outside the shelter system from some areas and by channeling them into less visible and valuable public places.

These various analytic descriptions are principally grounded in Gowan's observations, conversations, and experiences with 38 homeless men: 20 recyclers and 18 individuals who attempt to sustain themselves via other forms of street work, such as panhandling, sidewalk sales, and theft. These participants vary in ethnicity and age, which ranges from 32 to 64 years. These data are supplemented by visits and conversations with many other homeless men, and some women too. Although the number of folks she tracks is relatively small, and all of her core companions are men, many of whom appeared to be chronically homeless, there is no question that Gowan came to know many of these homeless men well; much more so, it is my sense, than researchers in most field-based studies of the homeless. And this makes sense given that she spent around 1,700 hours with her research companions and others between the mid-1990s and the early 2000s. That is a lot of time! And I think the book shows it.

Almost any study or book leaves one with a few nagging questions and concerns. One that I find somewhat troubling is the seeming presumption of relative consistency between what people say, particularly the rendering of causal accounts, and their behavior. I have always been cautious about overdrawing that connection and so am often left wondering about the behavioral implications of talk, especially when the talk itself is not always consistent across actors.

Gowan recognizes this dilemma but does not deal with it as satisfactorily as I would have liked. In addition, as is often the case with case studies such as this, some points of comparison remain unclear; Gowan discounts findings from other, similar case studies because they are not in accord with those reported in this book, but one cannot easily determine what criteria Gowan uses to privilege her findings over others. Certainly, differences in place and time matter, often greatly, and Gowan recognizes this. But how does one decide which claims are more generally relevant and can perhaps lead to a more theorized understanding of life on the streets as lived by the homeless? Perhaps there are only two recourses: one can recognize that similar studies of quite similar phenomena in different places and at different points in time are likely to produce some discordant findings, or one can interrogate for conceptual and theoretical purchase the overlapping case studies via analytic induction (or what is sometimes called negative case analysis). These few minor but nagging concerns notwithstanding, they should not distract from what otherwise is a significant ethnographic accomplishment.

In sum, this book has been a long time coming or, more accurately, it has

been evolving for around 15 years. I first met the author in 1995, when she attended a talk given at the University of San Francisco by Leon Anderson and me on our research on homelessness. At that time, her analytic attention was riveted on the work of recycling, as her interest in the competing discourses on poverty and homelessness had yet to evolve. But it was my sense then, and in a few subsequent meetings, that the author is an extraordinarily talented ethnographer in general, and of the homeless in particular, and that in due time she would produce quite significant scholarship based on her ethnographic encounters and keen analytic eye. She has done so with *Hobos, Hustlers, and Backsliders.* Not only is it an important contribution to the now expansive literature on homelessness in the United States, but it is among the best books written on the topic in recent years. And, as such, it clearly warrants the attention of academics, social welfare practitioners, political policy makers, and whoever else is interested in this persistent and pressing problem.

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Homelessness, Housing, and Mental Illness. By Russell K. Schutt with Stephen M. Goldfinger. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2011. Pp. 402. $49.95 (cloth).

In *Homelessness, Housing, and Mental Illness,* author Russell Schutt addresses (with the assistance of Stephen Goldfinger) a seemingly incorrigible problem in the United States: the tragic intersection of mental illness and homelessness. A sociologist at the University of Massachusetts Boston, Schutt threads together the many findings from the Boston site of a McKinney Act–funded national trial of housing and services options extended to homeless, mentally ill adults beginning in 1991. Working with the project's principal investigator (psychiatrist Goldfinger), Schutt contributed theoretical and methodological expertise to this mixed-methods project supported by over $13 million in funding from the National Institute of Mental Health and the US Department of Housing and Urban Development. With such ample funding, the 18-month project was able to include a health economist, a neuropsychologist, and three ethnographers, as well as a number of case managers, research assistants, and administrators. The abundance of data and lessons learned form the basis for this book.

The large scope and ambitions of the Boston McKinney Project (henceforth, BMP) afford Schutt a unique opportunity to go beyond the BMP findings parsed into two dozen journal articles and book chapters. It also offers the opportunity (and, for a social scientist, the responsibility) to ground empirical observations in larger conceptual frameworks rooted in the social sciences. The book touches on a number of topics in practice, policy, and research. These topics range from national discourses on homelessness to cognitive functioning impairment wrought by substance abuse. It is, as the author notes, "a whole that is much greater than the sum of these parts" (xviii). In the final sentences of the book, Schutt adds that a book-length treatment of the BMP is an ethical obligation to the study's subjects, because the partial and constrained findings published in scientific journals do not permit a fully rounded picture.

As with the four other McKinney-funded trials that took place concurrently in other cities, the BMP represents an innovative, coordinated effort to address the nation's burgeoning problem with homelessness. The focus of these efforts

falls on a particularly vulnerable group: chronically homeless adults who suffer from such serious mental illnesses as schizophrenia, major depression, and bipolar disorder. These individuals, often labeled "dually diagnosed" (55) because of the strong likelihood that they have co-occurring problems with substance abuse, traverse crowded shelters, hospital wards, group homes, and rehab centers. They sojourn in parks and subways, as well as on the sidewalks in between. The backdrop to this crisis is an unfulfilled promise of community care and housing that dates to the 1960s. Deinstitutionalization and the emptying of state psychiatric hospitals are key aspects of that failure. This historic background is described early in the book and sets the stage for the discussion of the BMP.

The BMP experimentally manipulated access to two distinct forms of housing-plus-services packages. Of the 118 subjects, 63 were randomly assigned to Evolving Consumer Households (ECH). These are congregate living arrangements that include on-site supervision and are intended to gradually evolve toward tenant-driven decision making. The other experimental treatment, independent living (IL), was offered to 55 individuals and entailed moving into single-room occupancy or studio apartments. The study involved repeated interviews and measures over 18 months. It also conducted ethnographic observations.

Schutt begins chapter 1 with a vivid anecdote about a formerly homeless woman who, as part of the BMP, moves into her own housing for the first time. This point of departure leads to an extended discussion on social theories of community and the challenges of intervening amid arguments over root causes of homelessness among persons with mental illness (chap. 2). Do these individuals descend into homelessness because of their own disabilities (a social selection hypothesis) or because of social and structural conditions that make homelessness an all-too-frequent outcome (a social causation hypothesis)? Mirroring the disciplinary divides between biomedical and social science theories, these opposing viewpoints do not hold equal sway in the real world of policies and practices. This can be put another way: the powerful effects of a focus on individual pathology and top-down clinical expertise drive programs and interventions in psychiatry and the homeless services sector. This dominance stands in tension with the rising tide of consumer advocacy and empowerment; the tensions form a subtext to this book, and proponents of the mental health recovery movement will find it familiar.

Chapter 3, entitled "From Back Wards to Dark Hallways," traces the history of deinstitutionalization and leads the way to seven chapters of findings on consumer-perceived needs, social relations, substance abuse, mental illness, community functioning (cowritten with Larry J. Seidman), empowerment, and housing loss (the last of these is a primary outcome of the BMP). The book's final chapter, entitled "Community Process in Context," revisits earlier themes and questions in light of the BMP experience.

The sequence and content of the book's chapters index key problems that implementation projects such as the BMP seek to ameliorate. Perhaps it is not surprising that providers working with consumers in the project are reluctant to endorse harm reduction, though they were required to do so by the study's protocols (in this case, only alcohol was permitted; illicit drugs were banned from the BMP's housing). Providers also struggled with long-held notions of dependence and debilitation that interfere with the promotion of independence and community integration. As one staffer notes, "I'd say 10 percent (can live independently). The people who are opting to live alone are not always the wellest; sometimes they are the craziest people" (63).

The findings, presented in user-friendly pie charts and bar graphs with accompanying narrative, draw on moderate sample sizes (dropping to 75 at midpoint and then to 27 for post hoc 18-year follow-up interviews). In this context,

it is surprising that the account includes so little of the qualitative data (the work of three experienced ethnographers). Referring to quotations from clinical records as "qualitative analysis" (246) does a disservice both to the absent data and to what is presented.

The book's appendix lays out a general, user-friendly tutorial on methods and the specifics of how these methods were applied in the BMP. It also acknowledges the study's limitations. The salient methodological strength of random assignment is noteworthy, as is the more conservative "intention-to-treat" analytic approach (303) that includes study dropouts in outcome estimations. It would be unfair to fault Schutt for the absence of a random sample (sampling frames of homeless persons with serious mental illness are not feasible), but the BMP's restrictive eligibility criteria produce a sample that is skewed toward safety and higher functioning. As Schutt explains (316), one-third of shelter residents are excluded because of a clinical judgment that they were incapable of living safely on their own. Presented as an ethical decision to protect subjects, this approach elides the possibility that such judgments are themselves questionable on methodological and ethical grounds. Predictions of danger to self or others are notoriously unreliable, and accurately detecting the capacity to live safely on one's own is even more debatable. To deny entry into the study on this basis raises ethical questions that are relevant today if not 20 years ago.

Notwithstanding some methodological limitations (which are relatively minor), this book offers a well-written guided journey through the tangle of policies (mental health, substance abuse, homeless) that govern how, from whom, and under what conditions individuals receive services. Schutt adroitly cites the vast expanse of relevant literature. This is an encompassing description of a social experiment in the full sense of the term: well planned, well funded, and well intended.

And yet there are serious concerns with the way these findings are presented and interpreted as having broad applicability. Most striking are the book's dated provenance and an absence of forward-moving temporal contextualization. Since 1991, much has been written about research, practice, and policies affecting homeless mentally ill adults. The author amply cites these works but stops far short of incorporating them into the book's discussion and implications.

The book's overarching ambition raises these stakes considerably. Throughout, basic social science questions are addressed (and potentially answered by what the BMP has to offer). Schutt begins by setting forth three framing questions: How do people choose a social environment? How is the social environment constructed? and What is the impact of the social environment? The questions, when revisited in the final chapter, highlight this dilemma of overreach and decontextualization. Because the study used random assignment, the answer to the first question was knowable from the start; BMP subjects did not get to choose their social environment. Similarly, the second question cannot be addressed except within the considerable restraints imposed by the study's sampling and design.

In this regard, it is unclear why the lion's share of description is given over to the group homes' social dynamics. The ECH settings provided a ready-made social group, but they were also beset by petty theft, substance abuse, and persistent quarreling. The author is evenhanded in presenting the advantages and disadvantages of group living. Yet, on balance, these problems and the lack of planned-for self-governance leave the reader with a sense of the failings of this arrangement even as the alternative (IL) is ultimately found to be the less successful alternative.

The book's third framing question about the effect of the social environment is more closely aligned with the BMP's goals, but it is nonetheless only partially

answerable because the project tested the effects of housing approaches, not social interventions. One of these approaches provided ready-made (but not chosen) social ties, and the other featured a situation that was more socially isolating but that also left the inhabitant freer to make social connections of his or her own choosing. The latter group experienced "winning the lottery" (88) by obtaining their housing preference but, according to the findings, is more prone to bouts of homelessness over the long run. How did this happen, and why?

Schutt finds that statistically significant predictors of "housing loss" (239), or homelessness, include substance abuse, African American race, being in the IL group, and having a preference for independent living at the outset of the study. These results highlight such familiar problems as the ravages of substance abuse and the heightened possibility of racism in eviction decisions. However, attributing housing loss to the desire for independent living raises the troubling prospect of a lack-of-insight interpretation, the controversial psychiatric explanation that attributes poor adjustment to the patient's inability to accept his or her mental illness. That BMP subjects who prefer to live independently prove to have such misguided judgment, and thereby lose their housing, runs "against the prevailing policy orthodoxy" (259) as well as the fundamental tenets of consumer choice and recovery.

The BMP finding that housing loss is greater in the IL group directly conflicts with subsequent research and policy changes that favor independent living over congregate care. Although not discussed as such, the rise of the Housing First approach (HF) hangs over these findings and casts them in an anomalous light. Begun in 1992 at New York City's Pathways to Housing, Inc., HF reversed the dominant congregate living approach by providing immediate access to permanent independent housing without requiring compliance or sobriety (Sam Tsemberis and Ronda Eisenberg, "Pathways to Housing: Supported Housing for Street-Dwelling Homeless Individuals with Psychiatric Disabilities," *Psychiatric Services* 51, no. 4 [2000]: 487–93). The New York Housing Study (NYHS), a randomized trial that ran from 1997 to 2001, compares HF with the congregate model. The study finds that HF yields housing stability rates of 85 percent (Tsemberis and Eisenberg 2000; Sam Tsemberis, Leyla Gulcur, and Maria Nakae, "Housing First, Consumer Choice, and Harm Reduction for Homeless Individuals with a Dual Diagnosis," *American Journal of Public Health* 94, no. 4 [2004]: 651–56). This body of research led the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration to list the Pathways HF model as an evidence-based practice in 2007 (http://www.nrepp.samhsa.gov/) and garnered other forms of recognition for the model's effect (Gretchen Locke, Jill Khadduri, and Ann O'Hara, "Housing Models," paper presented at the National Symposium on Homelessness Research, Washington, DC, March 1–2, 2007). This book is surprisingly silent on HF research even though the design and aims of subsequent studies are remarkably similar to those of the BMP (if not in its outcomes).

A note of personal disclosure is warranted here. I became intrigued by the NYHS findings in early 2002 and sought to use qualitative methods to pursue my own research on HF. The resulting research study, funded by the National Institute of Mental Health, ran from 2004 to 2008 and gave way to a second funded study that began in September 2010; both studies focus on contrasting Pathways HF with congregate care models in New York City. Nowhere in the data or findings from this research does one find evidence that is in accord with the BMP's findings and conclusions.[1] A coda or postscript to the book would

1. Deborah K. Padgett, Ben F. Henwood, Courtney Abrams, and Andrew Davis, "Engagement and Retention in Services among Formerly Homeless Adults with Co-Occurring

help to contextualize what has been learned about housing, homelessness, and mental illness in the ensuing years.

Schutt notes in the preface that he offers implications for social policy but "issues no call to action or suggestions for advocacy" (xx). This stance of neutrality is belied by the book's extensive references to extant policies and practices (if not extant research). It is also belied by a discussion that emphasizes the negatives of independent living to the point of questioning the "ideological position," held by recovery advocates, that individuals have the "right to fail" (279), and Schutt argues against assuming that "independent living is the universal preference" (279). The origins of such an assumption (presumably supported by subsequent research) remain unclear.

Clearly, returning the homeless to the streets, to hospitals, and to jails entails high costs in public dollars and in human suffering. Few would argue that a single, one-size-fits-all policy is an ideal approach to providing housing and services. Yet, the continued overwhelming dominance of the supervised congregate approach, notwithstanding research supporting HF alternatives, attests to the entrenchment of service delivery systems some 20 years after the BMP took place.

Homelessness is caused by a number of factors, and personal deficits cannot be viewed in isolation without reference to such larger social forces as deinstitutionalization, lack of affordable housing, and inadequate community care. The book addresses these forces, but the BMP data, findings, and discussion center on the personal characteristics of the subjects. Perhaps because of the constraints imposed by quantification and measurement, Schutt misses the opportunity to contextualize through use of the project's ethnographic data or by referencing subsequent findings. The author's neutral stance will disappoint readers who do not see a conflict between research and empirically supported advocacy. Readers seeking a full portrait of homelessness, housing, and mental illness will find that this book is, alas, incomplete.

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Women on Probation and Parole: A Feminist Critique of Community Programs and Services. By Merry Morash. Boston: Northeastern University Press, 2010. Pp. 192. $85.00 (cloth); $29.95 (paper).

Many practitioners and scholars are alarmed by an epidemic of incarceration in the United States. Despite the fourfold increase of women in prison since 1980, there has been little investigation of what happens on probation or parole. Probation represents an early response to a conviction for a low-level or first-time offense, usually one associated with a drug, public order, or economic crime, and parole is a period of supervision after release from a prison sentence that is considered a punishment for a more severe offense. The proportion of women

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Serious Mental Illness and Substance Abuse: Voices from the Margins," *Psychiatric Rehabilitation Journal* 31, no. 3 (2008): 226–33; Deborah K. Padgett, Victoria Stanhope, Ben F. Henwood, and Ana Stefancic, "Substance Use Outcomes among Homeless Clients with Serious Mental Illness: Comparing Housing First with Treatment First Programs," *Community Mental Health Journal* 47, no. 2 (2011): 227–32.

on community supervision has continued to grow over the past several decades, outpacing the increase among men and providing women with an alternative to incarceration or reincarceration if they successfully complete the court-ordered probationary or parole-board conditions. Building on an earlier effort to identify best practices in community programs (Merry Morash, Timothy S. Bynum, and Barbara A. Koons, *Findings from the National Study of Innovative and Promising Programs for Women Offenders* [East Lansing: Michigan State University, 1995]), Merry Morash's study of supervision in two adjacent counties in the same state provides a useful comparison of "traditional" and "gender-responsive" approaches (3). Morash attempts to address this knowledge gap and to inform effective outcomes for any offender on probation or parole.

Morash states that her purpose in conducting the study is to investigate how gender-responsive approaches make a difference for women under community supervision. Further, she indicates a desire to respond to critiques leveled at gender-responsive approaches. Some argue that such approaches contribute to excessive control (i.e., extending the duration of surveillance or increasing punishment) and reinforce narrow gender stereotypes.[1] Funded by the National Institute of Justice, Morash's study draws upon multiple sources of data, including case notes, initial and follow-up interviews conducted over a year's duration with individual women and supervisory officers, and official record outcomes. From these data, she creates 369 cases. The qualitative analysis of the cases assigns thematic codes according to various dimensions of the women's situations, their experiences under supervision in each of the counties, and their outcomes. Morash also divides the sample into subgroups that are based on the dominant crime or illegal activity for which the participant was convicted. The largest subgroup, almost two-thirds of the sample, includes women convicted of "substance-centered" crimes (27). Smaller subgroups include women convicted of economic only (17 percent) and violence-involved offenses (4 percent). The categorization of cases by dominant crime enables Morash to examine whether and how supervisory tactics are targeted to the particular causes for the lawbreaking behaviors and to the women's identified needs (rather than examining only the targeting of tactics for risk of further lawbreaking behavior).

Ultimately, Morash reports that "needs-based supervision in the Gender Responsive county promotes more positive change and less illegal behavior" than the supervision in the traditional county (137). Although she finds unmet needs and failures in both counties (i.e., women were sent or returned to prison), women in the gender responsive county (GRC) are provided more comprehensive services than are women in the traditional county, and services in the GRC are based on a more complete and holistic assessment of needs. In fact, the supervisory officers in the GRC are found to be more likely to act as case managers; compared to supervisory officers in the traditional county, counterparts in the GRC provide more referrals and increased wrap-around services in a "chain of interventions" (145). The overall trend in these findings is particularly evident in the GRC supervision of substance-centered women. These women continue to receive more referrals to treatment and more monitoring for alcohol or drug use than their counterparts in the traditional county during the study year. Women in the traditional county are found to receive more sporadic and lax supervision for substance-related issues. Morash finds that concrete support, such as bus passes, personal hygiene products, clothes, and fur-

1. See, e.g., Kelly Hannah-Moffat, "Losing Ground: Gendered Knowledges, Parole Risk, and Responsibility," *Social Politics* 11, no. 3 (2004): 363–85; Allison McKim, "'Getting Gut-Level': Punishment, Gender, and Therapeutic Governance," *Gender and Society* 22, no. 3 (2008): 303–23.

niture, is provided in both counties on a case-by-case basis but that the GRC offers it more often. Morash emphasizes the importance of two additional features of the GRC supervision: the supervising officer's relationship with program participants and group processes among program participants. Both features are demonstrated to be important to supporting change processes.

Morash suggests that these positive, consistent processes in the GRC facilitate women's movement away from illegal behaviors and toward self-sufficiency better than efforts in the traditional county processes. She also indicates that the GRC supervision makes women less vulnerable to abusive or coercive partners, provides more extensive treatment, and offers more aftercare than they would receive during incarceration, leading to a more intrusive form of surveillance, as some critics of gender-responsive supervision have argued. Where case notes and interviews indicate that the GRC processes exert greater control over women's lives than do the processes in the traditional county, Morash finds that many of the women "appreciated" the more intensive monitoring (108), as it leads them to leave destructive situations and make positive changes. These findings indicate, Morash argues, that in-depth and broad responses to women's complicated, high-level array of needs are better than the general and quickly low threshold of monitoring traditionally available.

This is good news; it suggests specific efforts that can help criminally involved women, especially the drug-involved individuals who constitute most of the women charged with illegal behavior. However, the study and its reporting reveal some substantive gaps. First, the sample includes the usual configuration of high-need and often-abused adult women found in criminalized populations, but there is surprisingly little racial or ethnic variation within the sample, which consists mostly of Caucasian and non-Hispanic women. Because African Americans are disproportionately represented in female prison populations at both state and federal levels, this oversight in sample representation is particularly noteworthy. If it were addressed, the study would produce more credible evidence that the supervising officers in the GRC treat their clients equitably in providing greater access to services when traditional and gender-responsive services are compared. The second gap is related to the first; the study treats women on both probation and parole as though those system statuses are the same. There is no discussion of how these distinct legal statuses are defined or how the conditions related to each status are determined. Morash does not examine the effect of incarceration upon reentry processes, including whether or not the woman received treatment for substance abuse or other therapeutic services while incarcerated. In many states, a prison sentence makes a difference both in the types of treatment to which women are exposed (or not) and in the level of their motivation for engagement in aftercare.

Finally, the study does not show how reunification with children or the women's relationships with their children's caregivers (most often family members) contributes to differences in the trajectory of desistance or to positive changes in the study year. Morash asked about children in both the initial and follow-up interviews, and her conclusions draw some implications for family support policies, but an overwhelming number of women live with their children prior to incarceration, and many hope to regain custody at some point beyond their involvement with the criminal justice system. These issues demand further discussion.

Despite these shortcomings, Morash provides a compelling study that underscores the long-term and ever-accumulating cost of ignoring women's needs. She also identifies the complicating factors that contribute to women's lawbreaking behaviors. These factors can include the dangerous places where they live, relationships with partners, the influence of mental health disorders, trau-

mas from both childhood and adulthood, and reliance on a mix of legal and illegal support networks for survival. In discussing these issues, Morash emphasizes these women's difficulties in attempting to gain traction on the road to recovery and reintegration. She documents change over time and how dedicated officers can help women to make positive changes in their lives. Ironically, many of the approaches used by the GRC officers are not so different from strengths-based and empowerment-focused social work practice. Might there be a time ahead when social workers and probation or parole officers recognize the natural alliances in collaborations in their work? Might they work together to better respond to both men and women trapped within the criminal justice system? Morash's addition to the research on women may well provide some of the fuel for such developmental practice and research.

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The Origins of American Criminology. Edited by Francis Cullen, Cheryl Lero Jonson, Andrew J. Myer, and Freda Adler. New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction, 2011. Pp. 433. $69.95 (cloth).

The US criminal justice system is one of the most salient institutions in the lives of modern-day Americans, particularly those in poor, minority, or otherwise disenfranchised communities. In 2005, an estimated 19 percent of US residents aged 16 or older had face-to-face contact with a police officer.[1] By 2009, more than 7.2 million individuals were under correctional supervision in the United States. That number includes 2.2 million incarcerated in state, federal, and local correctional institutions. With more than 3 percent of adult US residents under correctional supervision, scholars and policy makers focused on social services have recently taken an unprecedented interest in issues of crime and justice.[2] The social science literature would therefore benefit from a comprehensive review of the history of crime and punishment and the study thereof, but this would be an overwhelming task. Given the broad scope and multidisciplinary nature of American criminology, several comprehensive reviews are likely necessary to reflect the nuances of the field.

In their recently published volume, *The Origins of American Criminology* (hereafter, *The Origins*), Francis T. Cullen and his colleagues compile 18 chapters in which prominent criminological theorists chronicle the development of criminological theory. The editors, Cullen, Cheryl Lero Jonson, Andrew J. Myer, and Freda Adler, challenge the notion that criminological theory can or should be divided into neatly compartmentalized "schools of thought" (1). Instead, they

1. Bureau of Justice Statistics, "Police-Public Contacts" (US Department of Justice, Washington, DC, n.d.), http://www.bjs.ojp.usdoj.gov/index.cfm?ty=tp&tid=70 (accessed June 3, 2011).

2. Glenn C. Loury and Bruce Western, eds., "The Challenge of Mass Incarceration in America," *Daedalus* 139, no. 3 (2010): 5–7; Timothy M. Smeeding, Irwin Garfinkel, and Ronald B. Mincy, "Young Disadvantaged Men: Fathers, Families, Poverty, and Policy," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 635, no. 1 (2011): 6–21; Bureau of Justice Statistics, "Total Correctional Population" (US Department of Justice, Washington, DC, n.d.), http://www.bjs.ojp.usdoj.gov/index.cfm?ty=tp&tid=11 (accessed June 3, 2011).

focus on the personal, institutional, and sociopolitical contexts in which influential criminologists have worked, and, in turn, on how these theorists have shaped the study of criminology.

The editors intend *The Origins* to serve as a stepping stone toward a "sociology of criminology" (2) and deliberately chose the topics covered. As the title suggests, *The Origins* is firmly planted in mainstream criminological theory and places significant emphasis on theories of deviance, such as anomie/strain theory, differential association/social learning theory, and control theory. The chapters also cover routine activities theory, life-course criminology, and feminist criminology, among other approaches, and examine microtheories (i.e., those describing individual behaviors), macrotheories (i.e., those describing how environmental factors might enable or protect against criminal activity), and interactions between the two. Of even greater importance to the volume, the chapters examine the individuals and institutions through which these key theories developed. The book is best suited for readers already well-versed in criminology and, in fact, is part of an ongoing series titled Advances in Criminological Theory.

Notable, however, are the theories and theorists excluded from the volume. The editors acknowledge early on that criminology is based on a variety of theoretical perspectives, presenting an "embarrassment of riches" (6), and capacity constraints inevitably force an editor to exclude important influences. However, the focus on deviance (and on the most prominent theorists and institutions in this area) neglects the fact that the study of crime and justice is a broad field, which extends far beyond the study of deviant behavior. Winners of the Stockholm Prize, one of the field's highest honors, include scholars trained in public health, genetics, and law, as well as traditional social scientists.

The complexity of human behavior precludes sharp distinctions between one theoretical explanation of criminality and another, a fact noted by several of the book's contributors. In Alex R. Piquero's interview with Terrie Moffitt, Moffitt notes: "Criminology has firm roots in its legacies from sociology and legal studies, but it also embraces work from economics, public health, psychology, psychiatry, neuroscience . . . among others" (405). Likewise, in his discussion of general strain theory, Robert Agnew articulates a challenge for the field and its theorists: "At an abstract level, it is easy to draw distinctions between the theories (e.g., strain theory focuses on negative relationships, control theory focuses on the absence of positive relationships). At a concrete level, however, one can explain the effect of most variables on crime using most theories" (151).

With these interdependencies in mind, the volume's focus on antisocial behavior, and on individual theorists and institutions, underscores a missed opportunity. Little is mentioned about legal theory on policing, the courts, or the correctional system, and there is little discussion of scholars, such as James Q. Wilson or David Garland, who focus on legal institutions. Particularly given the expansion of incarceration and the criminal justice system since the 1970s, punishment theorists are as important to criminology as are scholars of crime.

Within theories of offending as well, the focus on mainstream criminology misses other important approaches. Although biological explanations for crime are interspersed throughout the book (including Lawrence W. Sherman's discussion of "violence and the brain" [189–93] in his history of Pennsylvania criminology, and the developmental considerations inherent in life-course criminology), the volume would benefit from a chapter that traces the evolution of the role of biology in criminological theory or that reviews the work of the notable scholars in this nexus. In addition, poverty and socioeconomic disadvantage are frequently implicated as causes of crime, but economic theories of crime are not discussed. Economic approaches to punishment and deterrence, like developmental theories of culpability, are prominent in both scholarly and

policy debates, many of which are contentious and call established theories into question. The historical underpinnings of these ideas require as thorough a treatment in criminology as that received by more traditional theories.

These omissions are particularly troubling in light of the concurrent development of theories across disciplines. For example, Travis Hirschi published *Causes of Delinquency* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1969) just 1 year after Gary Becker's seminal article, "Crime and Punishment: An Economic Approach" (*Journal of Political Economy* 76, no. 2 [1968]: 169–217). Although the two theorists may not have influenced each other personally, they each altered the broader field dramatically, on multiple occasions in rapid succession. Focusing on individuals, and particularly on criminologists, sociologists, and their home institutions, neglects the cross-disciplinary interactions that shape the study of crime and justice.

Despite these limitations, *The Origins* provides considerable depth on its chosen subjects. The chapters are presented in a variety of forms (historical analysis, interviews, and autobiography); however, each examines the development of theory through three distinct lenses. Most broadly, the authors present the "sociopolitical context" (9) in which influential theorists operate, suggesting that human behavior is logically viewed in terms of prevailing social norms and social problems. In addition, they consider the "cognitive environments" (9) in which theorists work, be the environments local (e.g., universities or academic departments) or broad scholarly networks. Finally, each author includes a biographic perspective, painting a picture of the personal factors that guide their subjects' careers (and in many cases, their own). For scholars engaged in in-depth study of the theories and theorists covered in this volume, the detailed information in the chapters of interest may prove invaluable.

The personal nature of *The Origins* also offers a unique (in the context of prior literature cited by the editors) history of a field that largely found its feet in the twentieth century. Although many of the field's founders have passed away, some of the most influential criminological theorists remain active scholars, though many may be nearing retirement. Contributors to *The Origins* provide important documentation not only of criminological theories but of the occasionally deliberate though frequently coincidental circumstances that lead to their development.

The "sociology of criminology" (2) to which Cullen and colleagues aspire is an ambitious undertaking. *The Origins*' focus on individuals and institutions falls short of the broader analysis and comprehensive treatment that a multidisciplinary field requires. Despite this lack of breadth, however, it offers considerable depth, providing a detailed history of many of the influential scholars and institutions that laid the foundations for modern criminology.

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A Home for Every Child: The Washington Children's Home Society in the Progressive Era. By Patricia Susan Hart. Seattle: Center for the Study of the Pacific Northwest and University of Washington Press, 2010. Pp. 272. $26.95 (paper).

A Home for Every Child joins the growing literature on the history of adoption in the United States. In 2002, Barbara Melosh published the superb *Strangers*

and Kin: The American Way of Adoption (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press), which analyzes adoption in the post–World War II period. *A Home* explores many of the same questions for an earlier period, the Progressive Era, in which professional social work was just emerging. Patricia Susan Hart's work is further distinguished by its geographical focus. Melosh and others primarily examine institutions located on the East Coast. Instead, *A Home* focuses on the Pacific Northwest, and Hart engages in a close analysis of the Washington Children's Home Society (WCHS). The WCHS was part of the National Children's Home Society, a Protestant child placement organization. *A Home*'s regional focus is a strength and a weakness. Although it sets up an expectation that Progressive Era placement and adoption in the Northwest differed from those practices in the East, one is left wondering precisely where such differences reside.

A Home admirably explores the historical development and practice of adoption from multiple perspectives, including those of the relinquishing parents, the children subject to placement, the adoptive parents, and the WCHS personnel. Hart posits that adoption practice developed through the interactions and contestations of these actors. Unfortunately, however, Hart's sources do not always allow for an analysis of the often-competing understandings and interests of these individuals and institutions, especially the point of view of children.

As *A Home* makes clear, economic conditions in the Pacific Northwest, like those on the East Coast, gave rise to poverty and child relinquishment. East Coast urban poverty at the turn of the twentieth century is associated with immigrants, but those impoverished in the Northwest were often native born and Protestant. Hart emphasizes that homelessness, child relinquishment, and abject poverty were endemic to the American West. From an analysis of WCHS documents, Hart demonstrates that child relinquishment correlated with female poverty. An overwhelming share of cases involved single, widowed, and deserted women who relinquished children they were unable to feed, clothe, or shelter. One-third of relinquished children were illegitimate, and one-quarter suffered the death of one or both parents. Some children were relinquished when mothers remarried and sought to protect the children from abusive stepfathers. Biological fathers rarely intervened in women's decisions to relinquish children.

The WCHS was established in 1896 to place children in permanent homes, to replace institutional orphanages, and to end the practice of making placements to families that took in children for their labor. A Christian evangelical understanding of the child drove the society's belief that all children could be redeemed through nurture and love. Although the WCHS strove to find permanent placements for children, such placements were not always available. The number of children needing homes was greater than the number of homes available. Moreover, not all children were adoptable: some were too old to be desirable; others had disabilities or behavioral problems. Such children remained in the WCHS's expanding physical structure.

Hart explains that the WCHS saw its home, eventually a quite large and grand building, as a site of transformation. Personnel at the home expected children to leave their old lives behind and embark upon new lives. This included urging children to forget their past. The staff also deeply discouraged contact with biological parents, but children constantly sought to find blood relatives, and those old enough to remember often refused to forget their past. Children also underwent physical transformations. Workers for the WCHS fattened, redressed, and bathed children new to the home, instructing them in manners and preparing them for adoption by Christian middle-class parents. Hart's description of the everyday material reality of the home is excellent, complete with details of what children ate and wore.

As Hart explains, couples in the Progressive Era primarily adopted children in order to love, be loved, and provide companionship rather than to provide labor. Most adoptive couples requested female babies, assuming that girls provided more love and were easier to raise than boys. Perhaps the most heart-wrenching aspect of the adoption process was the 90-day trial period. Preadoptive parents could return a child within that period, and Hart finds that one in three children was returned. Such returns were so common that the WCHS considered it to be part of the process of matching children with parents. In explaining the decision to return children, preadoptive parents often claimed that children stole, lied, or ran away.

Hart also provides a fascinating discussion of the enormous role played by the WCHS's *Children's Home Finder*, a bulletin that the society distributed widely through churches, other organizations, and subscription. The *Home Finder* publicized children available for adoption and contained articles promoting adoption. It created a discursive framework that legitimized and naturalized adoption and situated adoption as a Christian duty. Hart writes, "For adoption advocates, the task was in redefining motherhood from a state both innate and instinctive in biological mothers to a state of grace and civic duty attainable by non-biological mothers" (111). Such narratives further characterized the adoption of a child in almost magical terms. Childless and infertile couples were transformed into parents. Mothers were miraculously cured of illnesses. The grief that parents felt over the death of a child could be relieved. While shaping adoption practice, the *Home Finder* also created high expectations on the part of parents that children often could not fulfill. Hart recognizes that the bulletins served as propaganda and compiled "partial truths" (131) but understandably becomes so immersed in the primary documents that she sometimes does not entirely engage in a critical analysis.

Examining race, Hart finds that the WCHS took children of any race or religion and generally sought to place these children in homes with parents of a similar race or religion. She also notes that the WCHS expected nonwhite and non-Protestant adoptive homes to conform to dominant middle-class values. The analysis of race is rather thin. In part, this is because the children of the WCHS were overwhelmingly white and Protestant. Yet, one might have analyzed the role of adoption in bolstering and reinforcing changing concepts of whiteness.

A Home helps to round out historical knowledge of child-saving practices in the period before the full professionalization of social work. It also provides a fascinating and in-depth study of the multiple actors and institutions that shaped adoption practices. In the end, however, the reasons that parents relinquished children, children's experiences, adoptive parents' expectations and tribulations, the crippling poverty that single mothers faced, and the often complex motivations and actions of those who sought to help children, do not seem to be regionally specific.

Felice Batlan
Chicago-Kent College of Law

Brief Notices

Youth Gangs and Community Intervention: Research, Practice, and Evidence. Edited by Robert J. Chaskin. New York: Columbia University Press, 2010. Pp. 296. $120.00 (cloth); $40.00 (paper).

"In this volume, leading researchers discuss effective intervention among youth gangs, focusing on the ideas behind, approaches to, and evidence about the effectiveness of community-based, youth gang interventions. Treating community as a crucial unit of analysis and action, these essays reorient our understanding of gangs and the measures undertaken to defeat them. They emphasize the importance of community, both as a context that shapes opportunity and as a resource that promotes positive youth engagement. Covering key themes and debates, this book explores the role of social capital and collective efficacy in informing youth gang intervention and evaluation, the importance of focusing on youth development within the context of community opportunities and pressures, and the possibilities of better linking research, policy, and practice when responding to youth gangs, among other critical issues." (Publisher's synopsis)

Old Assumptions, New Realities: Economic Security for Working Families in the 21st Century. Edited by Robert D. Plotnick, Marcia K. Meyers, Jennifer Romich, and Steven Rathgeb Smith. New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 2010. Pp. 270. $39.95 (cloth).

"*Old Assumptions, New Realities* focuses on policy solutions for today's workers—particularly low-skilled workers and low-income families. Contributor Jacob Hacker makes strong and timely arguments for universal health insurance and universal 401(k) retirement accounts. Michael Stoll argues that job training and workforce development programs can mitigate the effects of declining wages caused by deindustrialization, technological changes, racial discrimination, and other forms of job displacement. Michael Sherraden maintains that wealth-building accounts for children—similar to state college savings plans—and universal and progressive savings accounts for workers can be invaluable strategies for all workers, including the poorest. Jody Heymann and Alison Earle underscore the potential for more extensive work-family policies to help the United States remain competitive in a globalized economy. Finally, Jodi Sandfort suggests that the United States can restructure the existing safety net via state-level reforms but only with a host of coordinated efforts, including better information to service providers, budget analyses, new funding sources, and oversight by intermediary service professionals." (Publisher's synopsis)

Where Are All the Good Jobs Going? What National and Local Job Quality and Dynamics Mean for U.S. Workers. Edited by Harry J. Holzer, Julia I. Lane, David B. Rosenblum, and Fredrik Andersson. New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 2011. Pp. 222. $24.95 (paper).

"*Where Are All the Good Jobs Going?* examines U.S. job quality and volatility from the perspectives of both workers and employers. The authors analyze the Longitudinal Employer Household Dynamics . . . data compiled by the U.S. Census Bureau, and the book covers data for twelve states during twelve years, 1992–2003. . . . Counter to conventional wisdom, the authors find that good jobs are not disappearing, but their character and location have changed. The market produces fewer good jobs in manufacturing and more in professional services and finance. Not surprisingly, the best jobs with the highest pay still go to the most educated workers. The most vulnerable workers—older, low-income, and low-skilled—work in the most insecure environments where they can be easily downsized or displaced by a fickle labor market. A higher federal minimum wage and increased unionization can contribute to the creation of well paying jobs. So can economic strategies that help smaller metropolitan areas support new businesses. These efforts, however, must function in tandem with policies that prepare workers for available positions, such as improving general educational attainment and providing career education. *Where Are All the Good Jobs Going?* makes clear that future policies will need to address not only how to produce good jobs but how to produce good workers." (Publisher's synopsis)

The Bureaucrat and the Poor: Encounters in French Welfare Offices. By Vincent Dubois. Translated by Jean-Yves Bart. Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2010. Pp. 228. $99.95 (cloth).

"Combining [Michael] Lipsky's street-level bureaucracy theory with the sociology of [Pierre] Bourdieu and [Erving] Goffman, this research analyses face-to-face encounters and demonstrates the complex relationship between welfare agents, torn between their institutional role and their personal feelings, and welfare applicants, required to translate their personal experience into bureaucratic categories. Placing these interactions within the broader context of social structures and class, race and gender, the author unveils both the social determinations of these interpersonal relationships and their social functions. . . . Welfare offices have become a place for 're-socialisation', where people can talk about their personal problems and ask for advice. On the other hand, bureaucratic encounters are increasingly violent, symbolically if not physically. More than ever, they are now a means of regulating the poor." (Publisher's synopsis)

How Information Matters: Networks and Public Policy Innovation. By Kathleen Hale. Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 2011. Pp. 240. $29.95 (paper).

"*How Information Matters* examines the ways a network of state and local governments and nonprofit organizations can enhance the capacity for successful policy change by public administrators. [Kathleen] Hale examines drug courts, programs that typify the highly networked, collaborative environment of public administrators today. These 'special dockets' implement justice but also drug treatment, case management, drug testing, and incentive programs for nonviolent offenders in lieu of jail time. In a study that spans more than two decades, Hale shows ways organizations within the network act to champion, challenge,

and support policy innovations over time. Her description of interactions between courts, administrative agencies, and national organizations highlight the evolution of collaborative governance in the state and local arena, with vignettes that share specific experiences across six states (Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Indiana, Missouri, and Tennessee) and ways that they acquired knowledge from the network to make decisions." (Publisher's synopsis)

Lacanian Psychoanalysis: Revolutions in Subjectivity. By Ian Parker. New York: Routledge, 2010. Pp. 248. $120.00 (cloth); $36.99 (paper).

"*Lacanian Psychoanalysis* looks at the current debates surrounding Lacanian practice and explores its place within historical, social and political contexts. The book argues that Lacan's elaboration of psychoanalytic theory is grounded in clinical practice and needs to be defined in relation to the four main traditions: psychiatry, psychology, psychotherapy and spirituality. As such topics of discussion include: the intersection between psychoanalysis and social transformation; a new way through deadlocks of current Lacanian debate; [and] a new approach to 'clinical structures' of neurosis, perversion and psychosis." (Publisher's synopsis)

Who Are the Criminals? The Politics of Crime Policy from the Age of Roosevelt to the Age of Reagan. By John Hagan. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2010. Pp. 314. $29.95 (cloth).

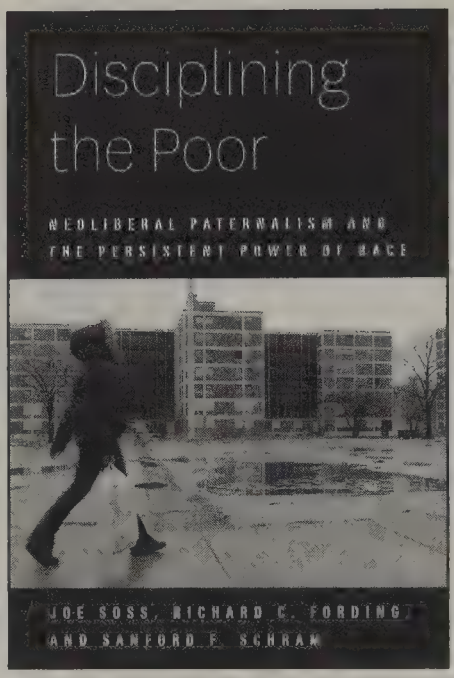
"John Hagan argues that the recent history of American criminal justice can be divided into two eras—the age of [Franklin] Roosevelt (roughly 1933 to 1973) and the age of [Ronald] Reagan (1974 to 2008). A focus on rehabilitation, corporate regulation, and the social roots of crime in the earlier period was dramatically reversed in the later era. In the age of Reagan, the focus shifted to the harsh treatment of street crimes, especially drug offenses, which disproportionately affected minorities and the poor and resulted in wholesale imprisonment. At the same time, a massive deregulation of business provided new opportunities, incentives, and even rationalizations for white-collar crime—and helped cause the 2008 financial crisis and subsequent recession. The time for moving beyond Reagan-era crime policies is long overdue, Hagan argues." (Publisher's synopsis)

Fighting for Girls: New Perspectives on Gender and Violence. Edited by Meda Chesney-Lind and Nikki Jones. Albany: State University of New York Press, 2010. Pp. 276. $85.00 (cloth); $27.95 (paper).

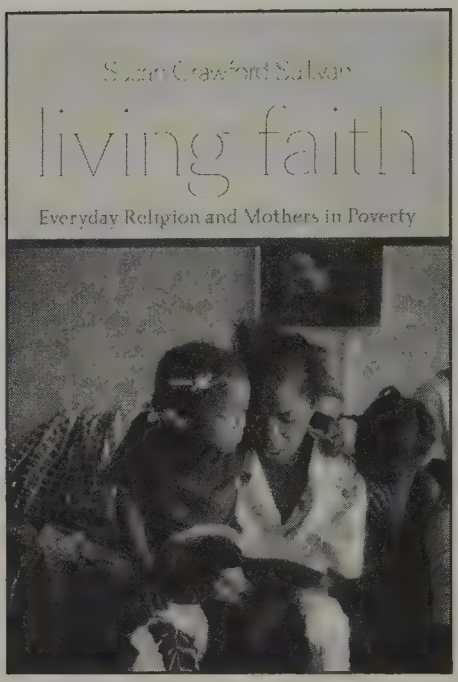
"Using the best data available about *actual* trends in girls' uses of violence, the scholars here find that by virtually any measure, incidents of girls' violence are going down. . . . The contributors examine the contexts that produce violence in girls, demonstrating how addressing the unique problems that confront girls in dating relationships, families, school hallways and classrooms, and . . . distressed urban neighborhoods can help reduce girls' use of violence. Often including girls' own voices, contributors illustrate why girls use violence in certain situations, encouraging us to pay attention to trauma in the girls' pasts, as well as how violence becomes a tool for surviving toxic families, deteriorated neighborhoods, and neglectful schools." (Publisher's synopsis)

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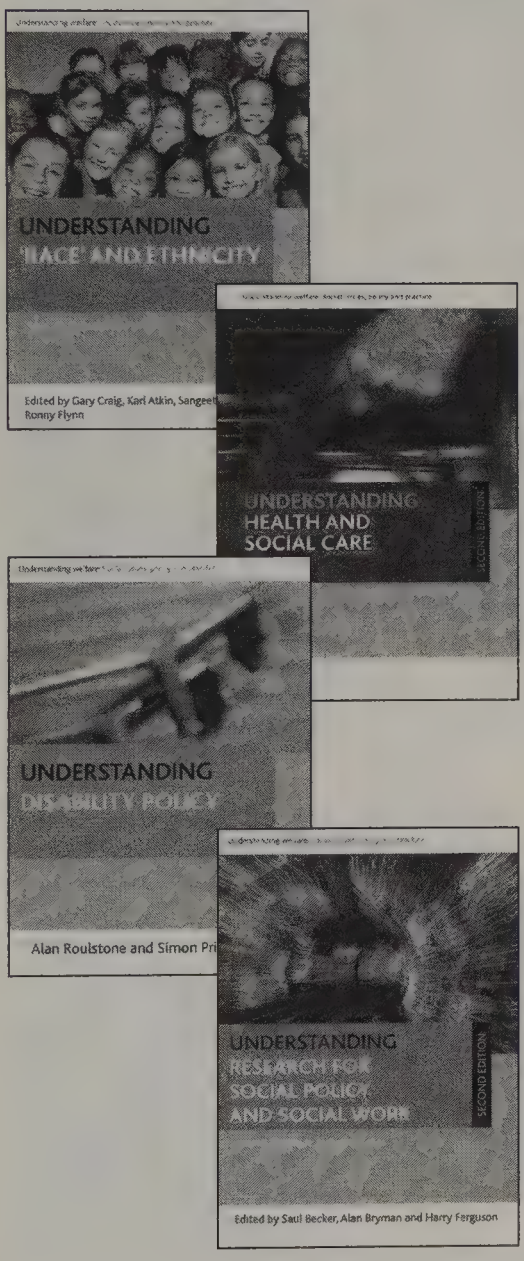
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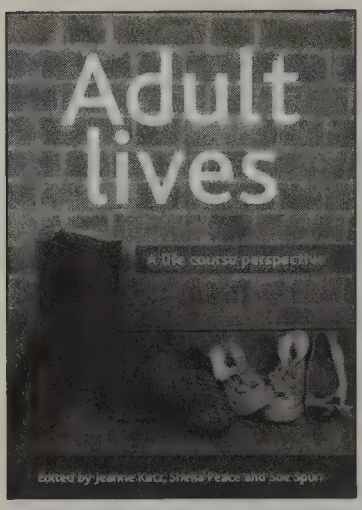
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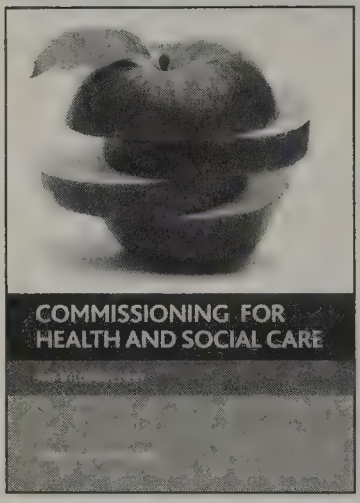
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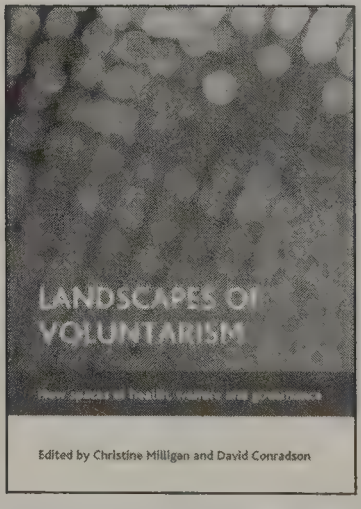
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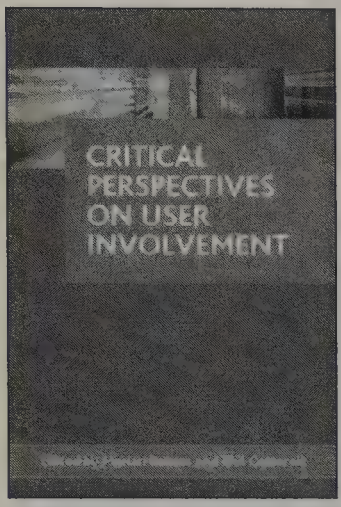
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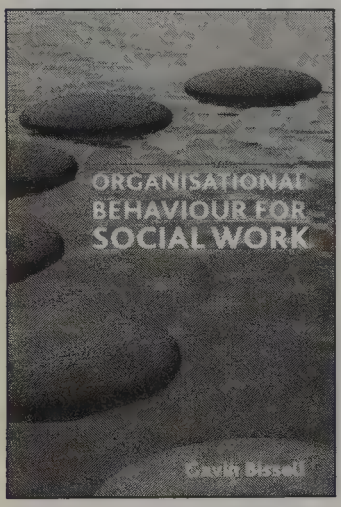
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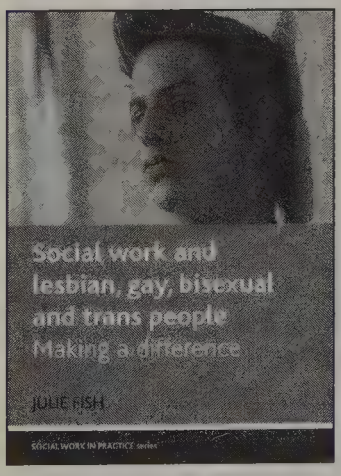
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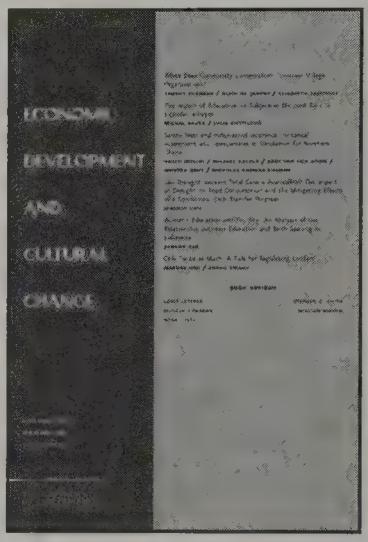
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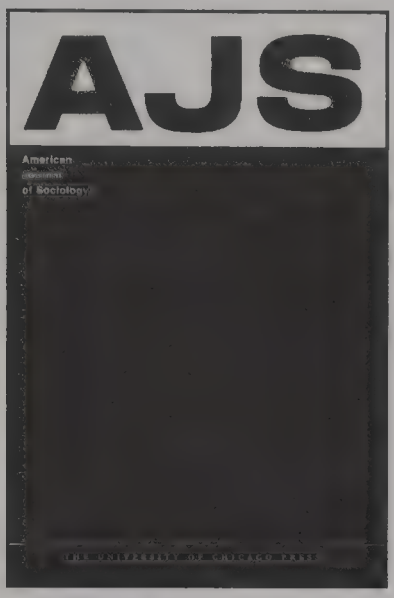
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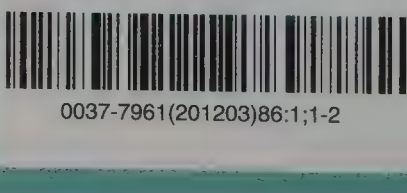
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Footloose and Fancy Free? Two Decades of Single Mothers' Subjective Well-Being

Chris M. Herbst
Arizona State University

The last several decades witnessed dramatic changes to US tax and transfer programs. Despite an abundance of research evaluating the effect of these work-based policy reforms on single mothers' employment and welfare behavior, little is known about mothers' subjective well-being. Using unique data from the DDB Worldwide Communications Life Style survey, this study examines several dimensions of single mothers' subjective well-being before and after the full implementation of policy reforms, finding that single mothers experience large deficits in most indicators of well-being. However, over the past few decades, these mothers witnessed absolute and relative increases in global life satisfaction, declining regrets about the past, and improvements in financial satisfaction. Nearly all of these gains occurred after implementation of the tax and transfer reforms. In contrast, results from measures of self-reported stress and anxiety suggest that single mothers' condition worsened slightly following the transition to a work-based policy regime.

During the last few decades, US tax and transfer programs shifted to reflect a work-based policy regime. Through the 1988 Family Support Act (102 Stat. 2343), states' welfare waivers in the early and mid-1990s, and the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 (PRWORA; 110 Stat. 2105), successive welfare reform legislation increasingly sought to encourage work and discourage welfare participation. Substantial expansions to the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) and child-care subsidies created powerful incentives to enter the labor force, and a series of Medicaid reforms allowed single mothers and their children to retain eligibility for health insurance after leaving welfare.

Although a vast body of research evaluates the effects of these tax and transfer programs on single mothers' work and welfare outcomes (e.g., Meyer and Rosenbaum 2001; Grogger 2003; Fang and Keane 2004;

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Herbst 2008), comparatively little is known about their influence on single mothers' well-being. This study takes a novel approach, drawing data from surveys on happiness and life satisfaction to consider the evolution of mothers' subjective well-being over the last several decades. Subjective well-being can be conceptualized in numerous ways, but scholars generally agree that these measures tap both the affective (instantaneous) and cognitive (remembered) dimensions of quality of life (Diener 1984; Kahneman and Deaton 2010). Although psychologists have studied subjective well-being for decades, economists and public policy researchers are turning to these measures to understand the ways in which self-reported happiness is influenced by a range of economic and policy phenomena. Yet measures of subjective well-being represent a largely untapped resource for conducting social policy evaluations.

This topic is also of interest because work-based policy reforms are predicted to have conflicting effects on subjective well-being. Tax and transfer programs should influence mothers' health, including their self-reported happiness and life satisfaction, primarily through changes in employment and income. On the one hand, welfare reform and the EITC may discourage time-intensive well-being investments (e.g., exercise and other leisure activities) by creating strong incentives to enter the labor force. If these reforms increase disposable income, single mothers might also shift toward the consumption of health-degrading goods and services, such as fast food and sedentary activities, which may have negative implications for subjective well-being. On the other hand, policy-induced increases in income may enable individuals to consume goods and services that enhance well-being (e.g., health insurance and mental health services). It is also plausible that employment in and of itself increases subjective well-being beyond the income-related benefits of working by conferring psychological benefits in the form of increases in self-esteem and confidence. Such benefits also may reduce the stigma costs associated with long-term unemployment and program participation.

This study has two goals. It begins by painting a descriptive portrait of trends in single mothers' subjective well-being between 1986 and 2005. This provides an opportunity to assess whether mothers' well-being improved, declined, or remained stable during a period in which the US social safety net shifted to reflect a work-first policy regime. The study then attempts to determine whether the observed changes in mothers' well-being can be explained by the introduction of this new regime. To distinguish the effects of policy reforms from other factors (e.g., economic conditions), the empirical strategy is executed in two parts. First, the study examines single mothers' well-being before and after reform to identify changes. It compares these changes to changes experienced over the same period by groups of women minimally affected by the policies. Second, the study examines changes in well-being over the same period for a subsample of low-skilled single mothers, a group that is highly likely to

be influenced by welfare and other social policy reforms. It then compares results from the two models. Finally, to ensure that the results are not confounded by changes in economic conditions, the study incorporates controls for the unemployment rate and state fixed effects. The analyses draw upon novel data from the DDB Worldwide Communications Life Style survey (LSS), which dates back to the mid-1970s, when the advertising agency DDB Needham commissioned a polling firm to inquire about Americans' consumer preferences and habits. The LSS is important for the current study because it contains a standard question on global life satisfaction, as well as several questions on subjective health. These data paint a multidimensional picture of single mothers' quality of life over the past few decades.

Background

The Employment-Based Policy Context

A series of reforms to the welfare system began in 1988 with the passage of the Family Support Act (Fang and Keane 2004; Grogger and Karoly 2005; Herbst 2008). The act's centerpiece was the Job Opportunities and Basic Skills Training program, which required states to fund a mix of work supports and employment activities. Although the law did not impose direct work requirements on single-parent families, it did require states to meet modest program participation rates; for the first time, the Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) Unemployed Parent program required at least one parent in recipient families to engage in a work activity. In the early-1990s, states began experimenting with more aggressive revisions to their AFDC programs. Between January 1993 and August 1996, 43 states obtained waivers from the Secretary of Health and Human Services to implement changes to existing federal AFDC statutes. Many of the waivers approved the use of strict and broad-based work requirements. Others imposed time limits on benefit receipt and sanctions on families that failed to comply with work requirements.

These incremental changes to the welfare system culminate in PRWORA, which repealed the AFDC program and replaced it with Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF). The 1996 act eliminates the legal entitlement to cash welfare by imposing a 60-month lifetime limit on benefit receipt and requiring individuals to leave welfare for work after 2 years. If TANF-receiving parents are not exempt from work requirements and not complying with them, PRWORA gives states the option to initiate sanctions that eliminate all or part of the family's welfare grant. The law also devolves program and administrative authority to the states. As a result, there is considerable geographic variation in TANF's implementation.

To ease the transition from welfare to work, PRWORA restructures

and expands the patchwork child-care subsidy system, consolidating four preexisting programs into a single Child Care and Development Fund. To be eligible for child-care assistance, families must include a member who is engaged in a state-defined work activity (e.g., employment, education, or job training), have an income below 85 percent of the state median income, and have at least one child between ages 0 and 12. Expenditures on the federal child-care subsidy system grew steadily throughout the early 1990s but exploded after the passage of PRWORA and the creation of the development fund. By 2005, states spent approximately $9.4 billion per year on child-care subsidies and served 1.7 million children per month (Child Care Bureau 2005*a*, 2005*b*).

Expansions to the EITC represent another important change to the work incentives faced by single mothers. Enacted in 1975 (89 Stat. 30, sec. 204), the credit initially provided a 10 percent wage subsidy on earnings up to $4,000. Major reforms in 1986 (100 Stat. 2107, sec. 111), 1990 (104 Stat. 1388–408, sec. 11111), and 1993 (107 Stat. 433) gradually increased the EITC's generosity by raising the subsidy rate to 34 percent for one-child families and 40 percent for multiple-child families. Expenditures on the EITC grew by a factor of 20 between 1986 and 2005, from $2 billion to $39 billion (Tax Policy Center, n.d.). Another important development is the proliferation of state earned income tax credit programs. By 2005, 17 states operated such a program, and annual foregone revenue ranged from $17 million in Vermont to $591 million in New York (Nagle and Johnson 2006).

A final policy shift came through the expansion of Medicaid, which provides medical insurance to low-income families. Prior to the mid-1980s, federal provisions closely linked eligibility for Medicaid with participation in AFDC, but a series of policy changes enabled unmarried women and their children to retain benefits after transitioning to employment. Another important change was enacted in 1990. It required states to cover all poor children born after September 1983, and the states met that benchmark in the early 2000s. Because of such expansions and others, Medicaid expenditures grew by sevenfold between 1986 and 2005, from $25 billion to $182 billion (Office of Management and Budget 2007).

Previous Research on the Effects of Tax and Transfer Reforms

Single mothers and employment.—These policy reforms led to an impressive empirical literature that attempts to explain the relative contribution of each policy change to single mothers' employment growth over the last few decades (Meyer and Rosenbaum 2001; Grogger 2003; Fang and Keane 2004; Looney 2005). A tentative conclusion from this research is that expansions to the EITC explain approximately one-third of this employment growth and that welfare reform is responsible for

another 25 percent. Offerings such as child-care subsidies and Medicaid usually are found to explain less than 10 percent of the observed employment changes. More recent work explores the ways in which social policy interacts with the business cycle. This research attempts to understand changes in single mothers' employment and welfare use following the recessions of 2001 and 2007–9 (Lerman 2005; Herbst 2008; Bitler and Hoynes 2010; Pavetti and Rosenbaum 2010). It generally finds that receipt of food stamps and other noncash benefits has become more sensitive to economic conditions since welfare reform but that participation in welfare (AFDC or TANF) is less sensitive to those conditions. It also appears that the positive employment effects of recent social policy reforms are amplified during periods of economic growth and do not fade substantially during recessions.

Single mothers and income.—A sizable body of work also focuses on the ways in which single mothers' income changed in the wake of welfare and other policy reforms. Early work from state-specific studies of recipients leaving welfare (e.g., US General Accounting Office 1999; Cancian et al. 2000; Danziger et al. 2000) and from studies using nationally representative data (e.g., Primus et al. 1999) tends to find that income among welfare leavers is lower than the income provided by the mix of earnings and welfare benefits prior to welfare exit. Other studies attempt to estimate the causal effect of specific reforms on single mothers' financial well-being (Moffitt 1999; Schoeni and Blank 2000; Grogger 2003; Bollinger, Gonzalez, and Ziliak 2009). Results from this work suggest that welfare waivers and TANF prompt small increases in single mothers' income and modest reductions in their rates of poverty; the EITC expansions led to sizable improvements in their economic well-being. Consistent with this evidence, a recent study finds sizable gains in income and reductions in poverty across most groups of single mothers (Frogner et al. 2009). Following low-income mothers between 1999 and 2005, the study indicates that these changes are particularly sizable among those consistently able to remain off welfare.

Single mothers and material well-being.—A small number of studies focus on such broad measures of material well-being as food insecurity and consumption (e.g., Falk 2000; Jencks and Winship 2002; Meyer and Sullivan 2004, 2006; Kaushal, Gao, and Waldfogel 2007; Slack et al. 2007; Frogner et al. 2009). This work generally finds small reductions in food insecurity and small increases in consumption over time. In particular, the research suggests that welfare reform did not lead to an overall increase in expenditures, but increases in work-related expenses, such as transportation, clothing, and food consumed away from home, are found for the period following welfare reform (1998 to 2003; Kaushal et al. 2007). Consistent with these results, findings from a recent study of five nonexperimental data sets indicate small improvements in some measures of material well-being after welfare reform (Slack et al. 2007).

Finally, Bruce Meyer and James Sullivan (2004) find absolute and relative gains in single mothers' consumption between 1984 and 2000; they note slightly larger increases for mothers at the bottom of the skill and consumption distributions than for those at the top. Although welfare reform's role is unclear, the authors find that relative consumption among low-skilled single mothers increased over 10 percent between 1984 and 2000.

Single mothers, health, and health behaviors.—Highly relevant to the current article is the research into welfare reform's effect on physical health and health-related behaviors. As summarized by Marianne Bitler and Hilary Hoynes (2006), this work tends to emphasize such outcomes as health insurance coverage, alcohol and drug use, and maternal and infant health. Welfare reform is found to reduce rates of health insurance coverage (e.g., Kaestner and Kaushal 2003), though at least one study finds that it does not affect Medicaid use and actually increases participation in private coverage (DeLeire, Levine, and Levy 2006). The evidence on physical health outcomes is more sparse and mixed. For example, Robert Kaestner and Elizabeth Tarlov (2006) find that welfare reform has few effects on mothers' health-related behaviors. Other studies find that it has small negative effects on infant health (Kaestner and Lee 2005) and is associated with reductions in breast feeding (Haider, Jacknowitz, and Schoeni 2003). In a comprehensive study of illicit drug use, drug-related prison admissions, and drug-related treatment admissions in the years following welfare reform, Hope Corman and colleagues (2010) find that health outcomes and behaviors improved after reform.

Single mothers and subjective well-being.—Perhaps the most relevant and most recently developed strand of research answers the call for investigation of well-being outcomes other than those assessed by the traditional economic measures (e.g., Blank 2002; Grogger and Karoly 2005). In particular, a small but growing body of work examines both long-term trends in subjective well-being and the effect of welfare reform on single mothers' subjective well-being, which is assessed by survey questions on happiness and life satisfaction (Ifcher 2011; Ifcher and Zarghamee 2011; Herbst 2012). This work finds that although single mothers are substantially less happy than other groups of women, their happiness increased in absolute and relative terms over the past few decades. In fact, John Ifcher and Homa Zarghamee (2011) report that single mothers are one of the few groups of women to experience happiness gains over time. Finally, evaluations of the 1996 welfare reform legislation find that such policy changes led to sizable improvements in single mothers' happiness (Ifcher 2011; Herbst 2012).[1]

1. A related paper by Rote and Quadagno (2011) finds that although welfare recipients were just as likely as nonrecipients to express depressive symptoms before welfare reform, welfare recipients were more likely to do so in the decade following reform.

Data and Empirical Strategy

The DDB Worldwide Communications Life Style Survey

This study uses data from the DDB Worldwide Communications Life Style survey to examine single mothers' subjective well-being. The advertising agency DDB Worldwide Communications Group (formerly DDB Needham) commissions Market Facts, a commercial polling firm, to conduct the survey on a sample of approximately 3,500 Americans. The survey has been fielded each year since 1975. The questionnaire covers a remarkably diverse set of topics, including consumer behavior, product preferences, recreational activities, and political attitudes. The LSS is important for the current study because it includes a large number of items that measure multiple domains of subjective well-being. These data, along with detailed information on respondents' demographic characteristics, employment experience, and residential location, provide a unique opportunity to study subjective well-being and to conduct policy evaluations.[2]

The LSS has several unique features that distinguish it from the General Social Survey (GSS), the primary data set used to evaluate subjective well-being in the United States. The GSS relies on a single question to measure global happiness, but the LSS contains numerous questions that allow researchers to construct a nuanced and multidimensional picture of subjective well-being.[3] As described below, the LSS covers such issues as global life satisfaction and feelings of regret about the past as well as multiple indicators of physical and mental health. In addition, the LSS has posed all well-being questions in precisely the same manner in each year since 1975, and the data collection procedures have remained stable over time. In contrast, the GSS operated as an annual survey until 1994, after which it became a biennial survey. This change coincides with the implementation of several reforms to tax and transfer programs, making it difficult to conduct policy evaluations. Finally, the LSS is administered through the mail, but the GSS is conducted in face-to-face interviews. The use of mail surveys allows DDB Worldwide to inquire about highly sensitive issues while maintaining anonymity and limiting social desirability bias (Dillman et al. 1996; De Leeuw 2005; Dillman et al. 2009).[4]

2. For an extensive introduction to and evaluation of the LSS, see Groeneman (1994) and Putnam and Yonish (1999). Data from the LSS are held in a proprietary archive, though the 1975–98 surveys are freely available on Robert Putnam's *Bowling Alone* website: http://bowlingalone.com/.

3. Subjective well-being is measured in the GSS with the following question: "Taken all together, how would you say things are these days—would you say that you are very happy, pretty happy, or not too happy?"

4. In all surveys used to study social policy reforms aimed at disadvantaged populations, a potential concern is that the individuals most affected by the reforms are the least likely to respond to the survey. An advantage of mail-based surveys (relative to face-to-face or

The LSS has several other noteworthy characteristics. Between 1975 and 1985, the survey included only married individuals. This is problematic for a study of single mothers. For consistency in the sampling frame, the study's observation period begins in 1986. Because the LSS underwent a dramatic redesign in 2006, the observation period ends in 2005. In addition, the LSS is based on a form of quota sampling called the mail panel. The process for creating the LSS sample begins when Market Facts invites (by mail) large, representative samples to express a willingness to participate in future mail inquires on consumer habits. From this pool of several hundred thousand individuals, Market Facts then selects a demographically representative sample for the LSS. Approximately 5,000 respondents are mailed a written questionnaire, for which the response rate is consistently between 70 percent and 80 percent.

Given these complex sampling techniques, mail panels in general and the LSS specifically are the subjects of extensive validity tests (e.g., Heberlein and Baumgartner 1978; Groeneman 1994; Visser et al. 1996; Putnam and Yonish 1999; Herbst 2012). Results from these tests indicate that the distribution of demographic characteristics for respondents in the LSS is strikingly similar to that for respondents in the GSS; there also is close agreement in the trends of attitudinal variables common to both surveys and a strong correspondence in the demographic correlates of those attitudinal variables. Such results increase confidence in the validity of these data for undertaking the current analysis.[5]

The analysis sample for this study is created by pooling LSS cross-sections conducted between 1986 and 2005 and by retaining women ages 18–64, regardless of marital status and whether they have children. This enables construction of the group of primary interest (single mothers) as well as two comparison groups: single childless women and married mothers. The group of single mothers includes never-married, separated, divorced, and widowed women.[6] Families with children are coded as such if they include at least one child between the ages of 0 and 17. Although the initial estimates come from samples of women

telephone surveys) is that respondents have substantially greater control over when and the pace at which the survey is completed. Respondents who complete surveys by mail are able to review and complete the instrument at a comfortable pace and with less regard for the amount of time needed to complete it. Thus, mail participants may be less susceptible to the time pressures and cognitive limitations that influence response rates and quality in face-to-face or telephone surveys (Dillman et al. 1996; Dillman et al. 2009).

5. See Herbst (2011) for a comparison of the LSS and GSS samples on demographic and labor market characteristics. With the exception of marital status (married individuals represent a larger share of the LSS's survey sample than that for the GSS), there is a close correspondence in the distribution of sample characteristics across the two surveys.

6. Unfortunately, the marital status categorization in the LSS does not allow one to distinguish more complex family-types, including unmarried women who are cohabitating with a partner. This is a potential limitation of the study, as it seems reasonable that the well-being effects of social policy reforms may differ across cohabiting and noncohabiting women.

from all levels of education, subsamples of women with less than a bachelor's degree and with no more than a high school degree are also explored to capture individuals increasingly likely to be affected by the tax and transfer reforms.[7] The number of observations in the sample varies according to the dependent variable and comparison group used. Sample sizes using single women without children range from 9,248 to 9,281, while those based on married mothers range from 14,919 to 14,950 (n = 3,167 single mothers; n = 6,180 single women without children; n = 11,854 married mothers).

Responses to 10 statements are analyzed for insights into various dimensions of subjective well-being. For conceptual reasons, these statements are organized into two domains: life satisfaction (five items) and physical and mental health (five items). The primary outcome, global life satisfaction, is assessed with a standard measure: "I am very satisfied with the way things are going in my life these days." This is considered a global well-being measure because it captures an evaluation of quality of life over multiple life domains (e.g., work, marriage, and financial situation).[8] Also included in the life satisfaction domain is a domain-specific statement regarding financial satisfaction: "Our family income is high enough to satisfy nearly all our important desires." In the physical and mental health domain, a key outcome is measured by responses to a statement that assesses respondents' overall physical health status: "I am in very good physical condition." Also examined are a number of domain-specific health statements about respondents' quality of sleep, prevalence of headaches, and ability to relax. Respondents are asked to indicate the direction and intensity of their agreement with the statements from both domains. Possible responses range on a six-point scale of from "definitely disagree" (assigned a value of one) to "definitely agree" (assigned a value of 6).[9] The empirical analysis examines the full distribution of ordered responses as well as binary indicators that equal unity for respondents who "definitely disagree" or "definitely agree" with a given statement.

It is important to be clear about what these statements measure and whether they are likely to be valid. Daniel Kahneman, Peter Wakker, and Rakesh Sarin (1997) note that survey-based reports of happiness

7. Multiple education criteria are used because the welfare reform literature is unsettled as to the appropriate education cutoff. Some studies do not use any education cutoff (e.g., Meyer and Rosenbaum 2001; Grogger 2003; Herbst 2008); others examine women with a high school degree or less (e.g., Kaushal and Kaestner 2001); still others experiment with multiple cutoffs (e.g., Bitler, Gelbach, and Hoynes 2005; Bitler and Hoynes 2010).

8. This measure of life satisfaction is fairly close to other standard measures used in the happiness literature. For example, the Eurobarometer survey (European Commission 2010) asks respondents: "On the whole, are you very satisfied, fairly satisfied, not very satisfied or not at all satisfied with the life you lead?"

9. The full set of possible responses includes "definitely disagree" (1), "generally disagree" (2), "moderately disagree" (3), "moderately agree" (4), "generally agree" (5), and "definitely agree" (6).

and life satisfaction capture experienced utility, or the perceived well-being generated by an experience, rather than decision utility, which takes individual choice as the sole indicator of well-being. Consistent with this study's use of multiple well-being measures, Kahneman and Alan Krueger (2006) argue that subjective well-being does not contain a "single, unifying concept that motivates all human choices and registers all relevant feelings and experiences" (4). The validity of subjective well-being measures is suggested by findings that they are highly correlated with one another (Fordyce 1988) and strongly associated with other dimensions of well-being. For example, reports of global happiness and life satisfaction are shown to be correlated with such physical attributes as smiling and laughing as well as with verbal expressions of positive emotion (Frey and Stutzer 2002; Layard 2005). Indicators of physical health, including self-reported health status and sleep quality, also appear to be correlated with subjective well-being (Diener, Lucas, and Scollon 2006). Individuals who rate themselves as happy are rated similarly by friends and family, and they tend to smile and display more positive affect during social interactions. Happy individuals are also less likely to commit suicide (Helliwell 2006; Kahneman and Krueger 2006). Reports of happiness respond to changing life events, even though basic personality traits maintain the stability of happiness (Ehrhardt, Saris, and Veenhoven 2000). Such evidence leads Ed Diener (1984) to conclude that subjective well-being measures contain "substantial amounts of valid variance" (551).

Table 1 provides summary statistics for the subjective well-being measures. Panel A presents summary information for the life satisfaction statements, and panel B summarizes the physical and mental health statements. For ease of interpretation, the figures show the proportion of women who indicate some level of agreement with each statement ("definitely agree," "generally agree," or "moderately agree"). In general, single mothers indicate that they experience larger gaps in subjective well-being than their single childless and married counterparts do. Approximately 46 percent of single mothers indicate that they are very satisfied with life; 57 percent of single childless women indicate this, as do 69 percent of married mothers. In addition, single mothers are substantially more likely than their counterparts to express regrets about the past: 80 percent agree that they would "do things differently," but this is indicated by 69 percent of single childless women and by 57 percent of married mothers. Single mothers also are less likely to feel optimistic about the future: 32 percent indicate that they "dread the future," but this is indicated by 26 percent of single childless women and by 21 percent of married mothers. Although the three groups are about equal in the proportions claiming they are in very good physical condition (50 percent), large differences emerge in other domains of physical and mental health. Problems with sleep and headaches, for

Table 1

SUMMARY STATISTICS FOR THE SUBJECTIVE WELL-BEING OUTCOMES, 1986–2005

Outcome	Single Mothers (1)	Single Childless Women (2)	Married Mothers (3)
Panel A: life satisfaction:			
"I am very satisfied with the way things are going in my life these days"	.456 (.498)	.571** (.494)	.688** (.463)
"I wish I could leave my present life and do something entirely different"	.567 (.495)	.508** (.499)	.317** (.465)
"If I had my life to live over, I would sure do things differently"	.797 (.401)	.688** (.463)	.567** (.495)
"I dread the future"	.316 (.465)	.261** (.439)	.209** (.406)
"Our family income is high enough to satisfy nearly all our important desires"	.304 (.460)	.463** (.498)	.562** (.496)
Panel B: physical and mental health:			
"I am in very good physical condition"	.499 (.500)	.521* (.499)	.504 (.499)
"I have trouble getting to sleep"	.473 (.499)	.429** (.495)	.348** (.476)
"I get more headaches than most people"	.394 (.488)	.302** (.459)	.339** (.473)
"I wish I knew how to relax"	.585 (.492)	.497** (.500)	.510** (499)
"I feel I am under a great deal of pressure most of the time"	.689 (.462)	.581** (.493)	.602** (.489)

NOTE.—Single mothers comprise the comparison group; standard deviations are presented in parentheses. The figures presented in panel A and panel B show the proportions agreeing (definitely, generally, or moderately) with the statement. For unmarried women with children, n = 3,138–48; n = 6,110–35 for unmarried women without children; n = 11,775–804 for married women with children.

* $p < .05$.

** $p < .01$.

example, appear to be more prevalent among single mothers than among women in the other groups. Single mothers are more likely to express an inability to relax and feelings of pressure; nearly 70 percent report that they are "under a great deal of pressure most of the time," but this is reported by about 60 percent of counterparts in each of the other groups.

Assessing the Evolution of Single Mothers' Subjective Well-Being

The story emerging from table 1 implies that levels of subjective well-being are lower among single mothers than among single childless

women and married mothers. Recent changes to tax and transfer programs may alter single mothers' well-being in ways that either mitigate or worsen these gaps. However, most of the policy reforms occurred during a period of robust growth in the US economy. Given that subjective well-being exhibits a procyclical fluctuation (e.g., Wolfers 2003), it is important for the purposes of this analysis to be able to distinguish the effect of policy reforms from that of economic conditions.

The analyses attempt to isolate the role of tax and transfer reforms by comparing changes in single mothers' subjective well-being to the changes experienced by single women without children and married women with children (the comparison groups). Although the analyses control explicitly for local labor market conditions, the comparison-group approach should appropriately account for the role of economic shocks in determining single mothers' subjective well-being. It is plausible that women in all three groups are similarly affected by changes in economic conditions but that women in the comparison groups are less likely than single mothers to be influenced by the tax and transfer reforms.[10] As Bruce Meyer and Dan Rosenbaum (2000, 2001) show, all three groups of women participate in comparable labor markets, receive similar wages, and are equally affected by fluctuations in the unemployment rate. They find that such similarities are even more prevalent among subgroups of low-skilled women. Thus, this study's empirical approach compares changes in single mothers' well-being over time to the changes experienced by the comparison groups. It also isolates a subgroup of low-skilled women in each of these three groups, comparing the subgroups on changes experienced over time.

The empirical analysis proceeds in two steps. It begins by investigating trends in subjective well-being for single mothers and the comparison groups between 1986 and 2005. As previously stated, this is intended to provide a descriptive assessment of whether and how mothers' well-being changed during the transition to a work-based social policy regime. To do so, the analyses estimate permutations of the following regression model:

10. There are concerns with both comparison groups' ability to represent the counterfactual to single mothers in an assessment of changes in subjective well-being. Although single childless women are ineligible to receive welfare (AFDC or TANF) and thus are a good comparison group for analysis of the effect of PRWORA, they are eligible for a version of the EITC. This version has a phase-in rate of 7.65 percent, and the maximum credit is substantially smaller than that available under the version for families with children. The EITC is thus less likely to influence subjective well-being among single childless women than among single mothers. Married mothers also are likely to be a valid comparison group because their rates of welfare (AFDC or TANF) participation are extremely low and they represent a nontrivial proportion of EITC recipients. In 2003, e.g., married mothers filing joint tax returns represented 23.5 percent of all EITC recipients (Tax Policy Center, n.d.). Given these concerns, a finding of consistent effects across both comparison groups should help to bolster confidence in the overall results.

$$y_{it} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 \text{single\_children}_t + \beta_2 (\text{single\_children}_t \times \text{trend}) + \beta_3 (\text{comparison}_t \times \text{trend}) + \mathbf{D}'_{it}\gamma + \varepsilon_{it}, \quad (1)$$

for $i = 1, \ldots, S$; $t = 1, \ldots, N$, where i indexes individuals and t indexes years. The dependent variable, y_{it}, represents various measures of subjective well-being for the ith woman in year t. Given that the LSS well-being statements employ an ordered response scale, equation (1) is estimated using an ordered probit. The analysis also examines trends in the proportion of women at the top and bottom ends of the well-being distribution by constructing separate binary indicators that equal unity for the response categories "definitely agree" and "definitely disagree." These models are estimated using a linear probability model.

A dummy variable, single_children, equals unity if a given woman is a single mother and zero if she belongs to one of the comparison groups. The term for the single_children × trend interaction represents a linear time trend (divided by 100) for single mothers, and the term for comparison × trend represents a trend (divided by 100) specified for the comparison groups. Finally, $\mathbf{D}'$ represents a vector of exogenous family characteristics, including age, race, and ethnicity, household size, educational attainment, and census region.[11] As previously stated, versions of equation (1) are estimated using the full sample of women as well as subsamples of low-skilled women who have less than a bachelor's degree. In robustness checks, the sample is further constrained to include women with no more than a high school degree. Limiting the sample to low-skilled women is advantageous because it enables the analyses to focus on groups of single mothers who are likely to be affected by the tax and transfer reforms.

The terms β_1, β_2, and β_3 are the parameters of interest in equation (1). To conserve space, the tables only report results for β_2 and β_3. The term β_1 provides an estimate of the average subjective well-being gap between single mothers and women in each of the comparison groups over the period from 1986 to 2005. The term β_2 reports the average annual change in well-being for single mothers, and β_3 reports that for women in the comparison groups. These parameter estimates allow one to examine absolute changes in women's subjective well-being over time. To determine whether single mothers experienced relative improvements or declines in well-being, the author conducts tests of the null hypothesis of the equality of estimated trends for single mothers and the comparison groups. The p-values from these specification tests are reported alongside the trend coefficients.

11. Also included in the model are dummy variables that equal unity to account for missing information in the demographic controls. Summary statistics for all demographic variables are reported in appendix table A1.

Although the results emerging from equation (1) are useful for determining whether single mothers' subjective well-being improved during a period that witnessed dramatic shifts in tax and transfer policy, they do not convincingly link the timing of well-being changes to the implementation of policy reforms. To do so, this study takes advantage of the fact that these reforms phased in throughout the early 1990s and became fully implemented between the mid- and late 1990s. The differential timing in policy implementation enables comparison of the change that occurs in single mothers' well-being from the pre- to the postreform period with the changes that occur over the same period among their childless and married counterparts.

To implement this approach, the study divides the years from 1986 to 2005 into three periods: 1986–90, 1991–95, and 1996–2005 (Meyer and Sullivan 2004). The preceding discussion suggests that the first period (1986–90) is marked by relatively few social policy changes; this study refers to it as the prereform period. The years 1991–95 are characterized by the start of two major EITC expansions, the onset of welfare waivers, and the creation of two child-care subsidy programs. The study refers to these years as the policy phase-in period. In the final period, 1996–2005, welfare reform passed and all states implemented it, the EITC expansions completely phased in, and a new framework began for the provision of child-care assistance. This is referred to as the postreform period.[12]

Using these temporal demarcations, the empirical approach is implemented in the following manner:

$$\begin{aligned} y_{ist} = {} & \beta_0 + \beta_1(\text{single\_children}_t \times \text{prereform}_t) \\ & + \beta_2(\text{single\_children}_t \times \text{phase-in}_t) \\ & + \beta_3(\text{single\_children}_t \times \text{postreform}_t) \\ & + \text{time\_period}_t\mu + \mathbf{D}'_{ist}\gamma + \phi S_{st} + \mu_s + \varepsilon_{ist}, \end{aligned} \tag{2}$$

where y_{ist} once again represents various measures of subjective well-being for the ith woman in state s and year t; single_children is a dummy variable that equals unity if a given woman is a single mother and zero if she belongs to one of the comparison groups; prereform, phase-in, and postreform represent dummy variables for those periods (1986–90, 1991–95, and 1996–2005, respectively); time_period is a vector of period dummy variables; and $\mathbf{D}'$ is a vector of demographic controls. Note that because equation (2) omits the main effect (single_children), the co-

12. The definition of these periods is obviously somewhat arbitrary, and experiments test several alternatives. For example, one alternative extends the phase-in period to include the years 1991–97 and decreases the postreform period to 1998–2005. The results are not statistically significantly different from those reported here.

efficients β_1, β_2, and β_3 capture period-specific subjective well-being gaps between single mothers and women in each comparison group. Therefore, differences among these coefficients render the relative change over time in single mothers' subjective well-being. There are two comparisons of interest. The comparison between β_1 and β_2 shows the relative well-being change throughout the policy phase-in period; that between β_1 and β_3 shows the relative well-being change after the full implementation of the tax and transfer reforms. As with equation (1), equation (2) is estimated on the full sample of women as well as on subsamples of low-skilled women.

Although the identification strategy relies primarily on the comparison-group approach to produce unbiased estimates for each policy period, several additional steps are taken to mitigate the influence of omitted variables. A chief concern is that the strong economy throughout the 1990s could be partially responsible for the observed changes in single mothers' subjective well-being. Therefore, the average annual state-level unemployment rate (S) is included in equation (2) to control explicitly for local labor market conditions. However, there might be other unobserved time-invariant differences across states. So too, there might be time-varying shocks to all states, and these shocks might be temporally commingled with the implementation of the tax and transfer reforms. For example, states' social policy choices may reflect persistent local attitudes toward disadvantaged families or, alternatively, they could reflect evolving national views that the role of policy is to inculcate a work ethic among public assistance recipients. To guard against these and other omitted factors, the estimated models include period fixed effects (time_period) to capture period-specific unobservables affecting all states. The models also include state fixed effects (μ) to capture permanent differences that occur across states and that may influence subjective well-being.

It is important to note that this strategy does not allow the effect of individual policy reforms to emerge. The periods under investigation are marked by a large number of policy reforms implemented more or less simultaneously. Disentangling the effect of each is an extremely difficult task. It is made even more difficult by the need to account for the robust economy throughout the 1990s. The approach outlined here attempts to uncover the bundled effects of these policy reforms in a way that purges the confounding effects of macroeconomic conditions.

Estimation Results

The main results for this analysis are presented in tables 2–6. Specifically, table 2 presents trends (from eq. [1]) in responses to the global measure of life satisfaction; table 3 shows the analogous results for the remaining outcomes in the life satisfaction domain as well as those in the physical

Table 2

TRENDS IN GLOBAL LIFE SATISFACTION FOR SINGLE MOTHERS, 1986–2005

	Comparison Group					
	Single Childless Women			Married Mothers		
Variable	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Panel A: full sample:						
Single mothers × trend	.321	−.019	.323*	.600*	.039	.373**
	(.301)	(.071)	(.123)	(.283)	(.063)	(.124)
Comparison group × trend	.155	.018	.057	.036	.061	.023
	(.197)	(.063)	(.078)	(.146)	(.062)	(.037)
Equality of trends (*p*-value)	.140	.985	.060	.015	.796	.012
Panel B: low-skilled sample:						
Single mothers × trend	.550*	.041	.386**	.749**	.066	.427**
	(.272)	(.088)	(.120)	(.259)	(.082)	(.124)
Comparison group × trend	.346	.036	.045	.079	.095	.025
	(.253)	(.081)	(.091)	(.171)	(.075)	(.048)
Equality of trends (*p*-value)	.007	.506	.005	.015	.779	.003
Dependent variable	FI	DA	DD	FI	DA	DD
Estimation method	OP	OLS	OLS	OP	OLS	OLS

NOTE.—FI = full index; DA = participant response is "definitely agree"; DD = participant response is "definitely disagree"; OLS = ordinary least squares regression; OP = ordered probit. Dependent variable is response to "I am very satisfied with the way things are going in my life these days." Standard errors, shown in parentheses, are adjusted for clustering by year. The dependent variable in cols. 1 and 4 is a continuous measure ranging from 1 ("definitely disagree") to 6 ("definitely agree"). The dependent variable in cols. 2 and 5 is binary indicator for "definitely agree" with the life satisfaction statement. The dependent variable in cols. 3 and 6 is binary indicator for "definitely disagree" with the life satisfaction statement. The low-skilled subsample in panel B is composed of women with some college or less education. The specification tests are of the null hypothesis of the equality of the trend coefficients (with the *p*-value shown).

* $p < .05$.

** $p < .01$.

and mental health domain; table 4 provides a descriptive portrait of the relative change in well-being between the prereform and postreform periods; tables 5 and 6 show the regression-adjusted changes (from eq. [2]). Table 5 focuses on the global measure of life satisfaction, and table 6 considers the remaining well-being outcomes.

Trends in Single Mothers' Subjective Well-Being

The global measure of life satisfaction.—Table 2 provides a comparison of trends in responses to the global measure of life satisfaction. Columns 1–3 present results from comparisons between single mothers and single childless women; columns 4–6 present results from comparisons between single mothers and married mothers. Panel A presents estimates

of life satisfaction trends for the full sample of women; panel B presents estimates of the trends for the low-skilled subsample. The life satisfaction trends are explored first and in isolation because they stem from the most commonly studied subjective well-being measures in the happiness literature. Because those measures focus on global as opposed to domain-specific well-being, the results represent a powerful marker of overall quality of life.

The results suggest that there is robust evidence of absolute and relative gains in single mothers' self-reported global life satisfaction over the period between 1986 and 2005.[13] In panel A, similar qualitative findings emerge irrespective of the comparison group, but the results appear to be stronger in the married mothers' sample. The results for the full life-satisfaction index (cols. 1 and 4) suggest that single mothers experience an absolute upward trend in global well-being, though single childless women and married mothers experience downward trends. Estimates from the separate trend analyses at the top (cols. 2 and 5) and bottom (cols. 3 and 6) ends of the well-being distribution indicate that the improvement in single mothers' overall well-being is driven by gains among those who report that they are the least satisfied with life. Indeed, the proportion of single mothers who definitely disagree that they are very satisfied with life is estimated to decline over the study period, and the change is statistically significant; the proportion of mothers who definitely agree remains stable. In three of the six models in panel A, the specification test rejects the null hypothesis of equal trend coefficients across single mothers and the comparison groups. This suggests a relative improvement in global life satisfaction among single mothers.

Constraining the sample to low-skilled women is estimated to increase the magnitude of single mothers' time trend coefficients. Estimates for the full life satisfaction index (cols. 1 and 4 of panel B) show statistically significant absolute increases in well-being among low-skilled single mothers, and the trend coefficients are substantially larger in magnitude than those from the full sample. This pattern is an initial piece of evidence that the tax and transfer reforms are at least partially responsible for the observed improvements in perceived well-being. Once again, well-being among single childless women and married mothers is estimated to decline over the study period, though the trend coefficients are imprecisely estimated. Also mirroring the full sample results

13. Consistent with the descriptive evidence presented in table 1, the estimated subjective well-being gap between single mothers and comparison groups (β_1) is fairly large and highly statistically significant. For example, the coefficient on β_1 from the model represented in panel A, col. 1, is $-.16$ ($p < .01$), and the analogous coefficient in panel A, col. 4, is $-.56$ ($p < .01$). These estimates suggest that single mothers' scores on the life satisfaction measure are .16 standard deviations lower than those among their single childless counterparts and .56 standard deviations lower than those among married mothers.

Table 3

TRENDS IN AUXILIARY MEASURES OF SUBJECTIVE WELL-BEING, 1986–2005, LOW-SKILLED SAMPLE

SUBJECTIVE WELL-BEING OUTCOME	SINGLE CHILDLESS WOMEN			MARRIED MOTHERS		
	Single Mothers × Trend	Comparison Group × Trend	p	Single Mothers × Trend	Comparison Group × Trend	p
Panel A: proxies for life satisfaction:						
"I wish I could leave my present life and do something entirely different"	−.314 (.270)	.869** (.234)	.010	−.503+ (.276)	−.539** (.155)	.914
"If I had my life to live over, I would sure do things differently"	−.675* (.344)	.960** (.258)	.000	−.940** (.348)	.448** (.157)	.000
"I dread the future"	−1.413** (.429)	−.460 (.311)	.075	−1.500** (.500)	−1.245** (.351)	.549
"Our family income is high enough to satisfy nearly all our important desires"	1.392** (.260)	−.376 (.290)	.000	1.697** (.217)	−.480* (.221)	.000
Panel B: physical and mental health:						
"I am in very good physical condition"	−1.401** (.391)	−1.823** (.267)	.245	−1.478** (.408)	−1.745** (.291)	.454
"I have trouble getting to sleep"	2.065** (.305)	1.981** (.395)	.806	2.175** (.269)	1.927** (.228)	.404
"I get more headaches than most people"	.977* (.388)	1.201** (.222)	.625	1.028** (.398)	.507+ (.271)	.265
"I wish I knew how to relax"	1.260** (.344)	.436 (.271)	.072	1.149** (.366)	.864** (.210)	.450
"I feel I am under a great deal of pressure most of the time"	.156 (.440)	.280 (.295)	.792	.131 (.428)	.266 (.235)	.727

NOTE.—Standard errors, shown in parentheses, are adjusted for clustering by year. The dependent variable is a continuous measure ranging from 1 ("definitely disagree") to 6 ("definitely agree"). All models are estimated using an ordered probit. The specification tests are of the null hypothesis of the equality of the trend coefficients (with the p-value shown).

+ $p < .10$.

* $p < .05$.

** $p < .01$.

is the finding that the least-happy single mothers witness the largest well-being improvements over time. In four of the six models in panel B, results from the specification test reject the null hypothesis that trend coefficients will be equal across single mothers and the comparison groups. This implies once again that global life satisfaction improves among single mothers over the study period.

Auxiliary life satisfaction and physical and mental health outcomes.—Table 3 shows the analogous trend results for the remaining outcomes in the life satisfaction domain (panel A) and the full set of results in the domain for physical and mental health (panel B). The remaining life satisfaction outcomes are interesting because they cover domain-specific areas of subjective well-being. They also offer an opportunity to check the robustness of the results for global life satisfaction trends.[14] For ease of presentation, the only trend results shown are from the full, ordered outcome measures and the subsample of low-skilled women.

The picture emerging from table 3 is that low-skilled single mothers experience absolute and relative gains in the proxy measures of life satisfaction over the study period. Specifically, such women are estimated to experience reductions in regrets about the past ("If I had my life to live over, I would sure do things differently"), increases in optimism about the future ("I dread the future"), and large improvements in self-reported financial satisfaction ("Our family income is high enough to satisfy nearly all our important desires"). In most cases, well-being appears to decline among the low-skilled subsamples of single childless women and married mothers.

The story changes somewhat if physical and mental health trends are examined. Between 1986 and 2005, low-skilled single mothers experienced absolute declines in self-reported physical condition ("I am in very good physical condition"), increases in the prevalence of sleep problems ("I have trouble getting to sleep") and headaches ("I get more headaches than most people"), as well as a growing inability to relax ("I wish I knew how to relax"). However, the comparable estimates for single childless women and married mothers identify similar slippages in physical and mental health. Such results imply that the trends for single mothers reflect long-term health developments in the broader female population. Indeed, the results suggest an absolute decline in single mothers' health across four of the five indicators but a relative decline in only one domain ("I wish I know how to relax"). None of

14. The measure of global life satisfaction is strongly correlated with the remaining outcomes in the life satisfaction domain. Coefficients for the correlations among all women (single mothers, single childless women, and married mothers) in the low-skilled subsample are −.44 ("I wish I could leave my present life and do something entirely different"), −.36 ("If I had my life to live over, I would sure do things differently"), −.28 ("I dread the future"), and .47 ("Our family income is high enough to satisfy nearly all our important desires").

the estimates identifies an absolute or relative health improvement among single mothers.

In sum, these results imply that single mothers made important absolute and relative progress in the area of life satisfaction between 1986 and 2005, but they remained stagnant or fell slightly behind other groups of women in the health domain. Although most of the life satisfaction gains appear to be concentrated among low-skilled single mothers, little evidence suggests that the health reductions disproportionately affect these mothers.

Relative Changes in Single Mothers' Subjective Well-Being

To assess whether recent tax and transfer reforms are responsible for the observed trends in single mothers' subjective well-being, the analyses compare raw (unadjusted) differences between single mothers and women in each of the comparison groups across the pre- and postreform periods. For ease of presentation, these differences are calculated using only the low-skilled sample. In table 4, column 1 displays the proportions of low-skilled subsample members reporting agreement with the given statements in the prereform period. Column 2 shows differences between the prereform proportions for single mothers and those for the comparison groups. Those differences are described as the well-being gap. Columns 3 and 4 present the analogous results for the postreform period. Column 5 displays the differential change in well-being between the pre- and postreform periods (i.e., the difference between cols. 2 and 4). The figures in this column are equivalent to raw difference-in-differences estimates of the effect of tax and transfer reforms on the subjective well-being of single mothers.

In general, results from this exercise mirror the story emerging from the trend analysis: single mothers appear to make considerable gains in life satisfaction but experience little or no change in physical and mental health. For example, fully 44 percent of single mothers indicated in the prereform period that they are very satisfied with life; 55 percent of single childless women report this, as do 68 percent of married mothers. These differences translate to sizable well-being deficits: single mothers are 10–24 percentage points less likely than the comparison groups to report life satisfaction (col. 2 of table 4). However, the well-being gap declines in the postreform period; the likelihood that single mothers express life satisfaction is estimated to be 8 percentage points lower than that for single childless women and 21 percentage points lower than that for married mothers. The changing differences imply that single mothers experience a relative improvement of 2.4 percentage points in global life satisfaction between the pre- and postreform periods (col. 5). Similar improvements are found for the other life satisfaction outcomes.

Table 4

RELATIVE CHANGES IN SINGLE MOTHERS' SUBJECTIVE WELL-BEING BETWEEN 1986–90 AND 1996–2005: UNADJUSTED DIFFERENCES, LOW-SKILLED SUBSAMPLE

Outcome	1986–90 (1)	Difference (2)	1996–2005 (3)	Difference (4)	Change (5)
Panel A: life satisfaction (% agree):					
"I am very satisfied with the way things are going in my life these days":					
Single mothers	.443		.443		
Single childless women	.546	−.103	.522	−.079	.024
Married mothers	.679	−.236	.655	−.212	.024
"I wish I could leave my present life and do something entirely different":					
Single mothers	.576		.576		
Single childless women	.514	.061	.565	.011	−.050
Married mothers	.355	.220	.324	.251	.031
"If I had my life to live over, I would sure do things differently":					
Single mothers	.807		.802		
Single childless women	.692	.114	.760	.042	−.072
Married mothers	.587	.219	.608	.193	−.026
"I dread the future":					
Single mothers	.335		.298		
Single childless women	.310	.024	.299	−.001	−.025
Married mothers	.261	.073	.208	.089	.016
"Our family income is high enough to satisfy nearly all our important desires":					
Single mothers	.257		.288		
Single childless women	.432	−.174	.394	−.105	.069
Married mothers	.518	−.260	.503	−.214	.046
Panel B: physical and mental health (% agree):					
"I am in very good physical condition":					
Single mothers	.543		.463		
Single childless women	.554	−.010	.465	−.001	.009
Married mothers	.553	−.010	.433	.030	.040
"I have trouble getting to sleep":					
Single mothers	.445		.525		
Single childless women	.423	.022	.514	.011	−.011
Married mothers	.344	.101	.426	.099	−.002
"I get more headaches than most people":					
Single mothers	.378		.422		
Single childless women	.289	.088	.331	.091	.003
Married mothers	.356	.021	.363	.059	.038
"I wish I knew how to relax":					
Single mothers	.582		.627		
Single childless women	.542	.039	.537	.089	.050
Married mothers	.519	.062	.547	.079	.017
"I feel I am under a great deal of pressure most of the time":					
Single mothers	.679		.688		
Single childless women	.576	.103	.580	.107	.004
Married mothers	.591	.087	.594	.093	.006

NOTE.—The figures presented in panels A and B show the proportions agreeing ("definitely," "generally," or "moderately") with the statement. The low-skilled subsample includes women with some college or less education.

Results in panel B of table 4 once again offer mixed evidence concerning the potential effect of tax and transfer reforms on the physical and mental health of low-skilled single mothers. Low-skilled single mothers' self-reported physical health is estimated to improve between the pre- and postreform periods relative to that of their counterparts in the single childless and married mother groups. Indeed, the relative likelihood that low-skilled single mothers are in very good physical condition is estimated to increase between 1 and 4 percentage points over the study period. However, these single mothers appear to become increasingly likely to report problems with headaches. In addition, a proxy for mental stress ("I wish I knew how to relax") suggests that low-skilled single mothers experience a growing inability to relax from the pre- to the postreform period; specifically, the likelihood of mental stress (inability to relax) among low-skilled single mothers in the prereform period is estimated to be 4 percentage points higher than that among their single childless counterparts and 6 percentage points higher than that among their married counterparts. In the postreform period, the likelihood of such stress among low-skilled single mothers is estimated to be 9 percentage points higher than that among the single childless counterparts and 8 percentage points higher than that among the married counterparts. The changing differentials for this health domain imply that, over the study period, there is a 5 percentage-point change in the difference between single mothers and single childless women as well as a 2 percentage-point change in the difference between single and married mothers.

By comparing low-skilled single mothers with low-skilled single, childless women and low-skilled married mothers, the analysis attempts to isolate the effect of social policy reforms, which arguably affect only single mothers, from the effect of exogenous economic shocks, which tend to affect all three groups of women in a similar manner. However, the observed changes in well-being could occur if single mothers or women in one of the comparison groups experienced compositional changes between the pre- and postreform periods. Therefore, it is important to control for women's observable characteristics.

Regression-Adjusted Changes in Subjective Well-Being

Tables 5 and 6 present the regression-adjusted estimates of single mothers' relative well-being changes, as modeled in equation (2). Table 5 focuses on the global measure of life satisfaction. Table 6 examines the remaining outcomes in the life satisfaction domain and the full set of outcomes in the physical and mental health domain. For ease of presentation, only the full, ordered, subjective well-being outcomes are considered, and all models are estimated using an ordered probit. Coefficients can be interpreted as the standard-deviation difference be-

tween single mothers and the comparison group on the well-being outcome within the specified period (Stevenson and Wolfers 2009).[15] In results for the phase-in and postreform periods, coefficients identified with the superscript "a" (and associated standard errors) indicate that a given well-being differential is statistically significantly different (at the 10 percent level or better) from the prereform differential.[16] Those coefficients imply that single mothers' well-being changes over time relative to that of women in the comparison groups.

The global measure of life satisfaction.—In table 5, columns 1–3 use single childless women as the comparison group, and columns 4–6 use married mothers as the comparison group. For each comparison group, panel A shows results from the full sample and panel B shows those from the low-skilled subsample. Columns 1 and 4 present the baseline results. Results in columns 2 and 5 stem from a model that controls for the state-level unemployment rate. Those in columns 3 and 6 come from models that control for the unemployment rate as well as state fixed effects. Because the addition of these controls does not change the results to a statistically significant degree, the discussion focuses on the richest specification (cols. 3 and 6).

The regression-adjusted global life satisfaction estimates are qualitatively similar to the raw differences presented in table 4. Single mothers reportedly experience sizable life satisfaction deficits throughout the prereform period, and these deficits increase in magnitude if the sample is constrained to low-skilled women. On the life satisfaction index, low-skilled single mothers are estimated to score .17 standard deviations below single childless women (panel B, col. 3) and .57 standard deviations below married mothers (panel B, col. 6). Furthermore, these results suggest that the well-being differences remain largely fixed throughout the policy phase-in period; low-skilled single mothers score .16 standard deviations lower than single childless women and .50 standard deviations lower than married mothers.

Results for the postreform period suggest marked improvement in single mothers' global life satisfaction after full implementation of the tax and transfer reforms. The life-satisfaction gap between low-skilled single mothers and their single childless counterparts almost fully closes, and low-skilled single mothers make substantial progress relative to their married counterparts. Specifically, the life satisfaction gap between low-skilled single mothers and their single childless counterparts is estimated

15. The ordered probit yields coefficients derived from a latent, standard, normal well-being index, and the results are conditional on the covariates. Specification checks first standardize the well-being indexes to have a mean of zero and a standard deviation of unity. The models are then reestimated using ordinary least-squares regression. These results are virtually identical to those reported here.

16. That is, two specification tests are conducted: null hypothesis: single mother × (1986–90) − single mother × (1991–95) = 0; null hypothesis: single mother × (1986–90) − single mother × (1996–2005) = 0.

Table 5

REGRESSION-ADJUSTED RELATIVE CHANGES IN SINGLE MOTHERS' GLOBAL LIFE SATISFACTION

	Comparison Group					
	Single Childless Women			Married Mothers		
Variable	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Panel A: full sample:						
Single mother × prereform	−.129** (.048)	−.132** (.048)	−.133** (.045)	.558** (.031)	−.558** (.030)	−.557** (.030)
Single mother × phase-in	−.160** (.048)	−.159** (.048)	−.166** (.047)	.505** (.057)	−.504** (.057)	−.509** (.056)
Single mother × postreform	−.088* (.036)	−.088* (.036)	−.089* (.035)	.460[a,]** (.025)	−.460[a,]** (.025)	−.463[a,]* (.025)
Panel B: low-skilled sample:						
Single mother × prereform	−.169** (.060)	−.170** (.059)	−.172** (.054)	−.574** (.039)	−.574** (.039)	−.573** (.039)
Single mother × phase-in	−.154** (.051)	−.153** (.051)	−.155** (.049)	−.490** (.059)	−.490** (.059)	−.496** (.059)
Single mother × postreform	−.068[a,]+ (.035)	−.068[a,]* (.035)	−.066[a,]+ (.035)	−.448[a,]** (.034)	−.448[a,]** (.034)	−.450[a,]** (.035)
Demographic covariates	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
State unemployment rate	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
State fixed effects	No	No	Yes	No	No	Yes

NOTE.—Dependent variable is response to "I am very satisfied with the way things are going in my life these days." Standard errors, shown in parentheses, are adjusted for clustering by year. All models are estimated using an ordered probit. Cols. 1–3 use single women without children as the comparison group; cols. 4–6 use married women with children as the comparison group. The low-skilled sample in panel B is defined to include women with some college education or less. All models include dummy variables for two periods: 1991–95 and 1996–2005. The census region dummy variables are excluded from the model in cols. 3 and 6 and are replaced by state fixed effects. Two specification tests are conducted: null hypothesis: single mother × (1986–90) − single mother × (1991–95) = 0; null hypothesis: single mother × (1986–90) − single mother × (1996–2005) = 0.

[a] The null hypothesis of the equality of the period-specific coefficients is rejected at the 10% level or better.

+ $p < .10$.

* $p < .05$.

** $p < .01$.

to decline to .07 standard deviations; that between low-skilled single mothers and their married counterparts declines to .45 standard deviations. The coefficients marked with the superscript "a" (and associated standard errors) suggest that life satisfaction improves among single mothers between the pre- and postreform periods: the life satisfaction gap between low-skilled single mothers and their single childless counterparts is estimated to decline by approximately 60 percent; that between low-skilled single mothers and their married counterparts declines by about 22 percent.

Auxiliary life satisfaction and physical and mental health outcomes.—Table 6 shows the analogous results for the remaining outcomes in the life satisfaction domain (panel A) and the full set of results in the physical and mental health domain (panel B). For ease of presentation, the table only presents results from the analysis of the full ordered outcome measures for the subsample of low-skilled women. All models include the controls for the state-level unemployment rate and state fixed effects.

Largely positive findings also emerge for the remaining measures in the life satisfaction domain. In particular, results for the postreform period suggest that low-skilled single mothers are statistically significantly less likely than women in either comparison group to express regrets about the past ("If I had my life to live over, I would sure do things differently"). For this measure, the well-being gap between low-skilled single mothers and single childless counterparts is estimated to decline by 90 percent (from .19 to .02 standard deviations); that between low-skilled single mothers and married counterparts declines by 24 percent (from .57 to .43 standard deviations). In addition, low-skilled single mothers make progress in self-reported financial satisfaction. The financial well-being deficit between these mothers and single childless counterparts is estimated to decline by about 50 percent (from .49 to .23 standard deviations). That between low-skilled single mothers and their married counterparts declines by 25 percent (from .75 to .47 standard deviations).

Results for measures of physical and mental health are also consistent with the raw differences presented in table 4. Low-skilled single mothers are estimated to experience small but statistically nonsignificant reductions in the gap between their health and that of counterparts in each comparison group. For both sleep quality and frequency of headaches, the well-being gap between low-skilled single mothers and their married counterparts is estimated to increase between the pre- and postreform periods. However, neither change in these gaps is estimated to be statistically significant. Mental health is the one domain in which single mothers appear to lose considerable ground. It is captured by the indexes that measure the respondent's inability to relax and the self-reported feelings of pressure. In the prereform period, low-skilled single mothers scored .01 standard deviations below their single childless coun-

Table 6

REGRESSION-ADJUSTED RELATIVE CHANGES IN MEASURES OF SINGLE MOTHERS' SUBJECTIVE WELL-BEING, LOW-SKILLED SAMPLE

SUBJECTIVE WELL-BEING OUTCOME	COMPARISON GROUP	
	Single Childless Women	Married Mothers
Panel A: proxies for life satisfaction:		
"I wish I could leave my present life and do something entirely different":		
Single mother × prereform	.029 (.053)	.493** (.030)
Single mother × phase-in	−.003 (.024)	.527** (.030)
Single mother × postreform	−.083[a] (.051)	.534** (.039)
"If I had my life to live over, I would sure do things differently":		
Single mother × prereform	.190** (.073)	.568** (.057)
Single mother × phase-in	.188* (.084)	.507** (.063)
Single mother × postreform	.019[a] (.040)	.430[a]** (.039)
"I dread the future":		
Single mother × prereform	.035 (.077)	.204** (.057)
Single mother × phase-in	.134** (.044)	.271** (.048)
Single mother × postreform	−.037 (.046)	.205** (.032)
"Our family income is high enough to satisfy nearly all our important desires":		
Single mother × prereform	−.489** (.065)	−.749** (.040)
Single mother × phase-in	−.259[a]** (.043)	−.580[a]** (.031)
Single mother × postreform	−.232[a]** (.037)	−.470[a]** (.035)
Panel B: physical and mental health:		
"I am in very good physical condition":		
Single mother × prereform	−.031 (.037)	−.069* (.031)
Single mother × phase-in	−.024 (.066)	−.049 (.079)
Single mother × postreform	.018 (.040)	−.026 (.033)
"I have trouble getting to sleep":		
Single mother × prereform	−.051 (.056)	.157** (.050)
Single mother × phase-in	.000 (.051)	.190** (.044)
Single mother × postreform	−.037 (.030)	.192** (.019)
"I get more headaches than most people":		
Single mother × prereform	.055 (.068)	.082+ (.048)
Single mother × phase-in	.030 (.050)	.108* (.043)
Single mother × postreform	.030 (.037)	.158** (.036)
"I wish I knew how to relax":		
Single mother × prereform	−.011 (.045)	.142** (.041)
Single mother × phase-in	.167[a]** (.039)	.196** (.031)
Single mother × postreform	.133[a]** (.044)	.193** (.031)
"I feel I am under a great deal of pressure most of the time":		
Single mother × prereform	.130* (.066)	.316** (.051)
Single mother × phase-in	.312[a]** (.033)	.398** (.029)
Single mother × postreform	.164** (.042)	.303** (.029)

Table 6 (*Continued*)

Subjective Well-Being Outcome	Comparison Group	
	Single Childless Women	Married Mothers
Demographic covariates	Yes	Yes
State unemployment rate	Yes	Yes
State fixed effects	Yes	Yes

Note.—Standard errors, shown in parentheses, are adjusted for clustering by year. All models are estimated using an ordered probit on the low-skilled sample (some college education or less). All models include dummy variables for the periods 1991–95 and 1996–2005 as well as state fixed effects. Two specification tests are conducted: null hypothesis: single mother × (1986–90) − single mother × (1991–95) = 0; null hypothesis: single mother × (1986–90) − single mother × (1996–2005) = 0.

[a] The null hypothesis of the equality of the period-specific coefficients is rejected at the 10% level or better.

$^{+}$ $p < .10$.

* $p < .05$.

** $p < .01$.

terparts on the statement, "I wish I knew how to relax." Throughout the postreform period, however, these mothers scored .13 standard deviations higher than the single childless counterparts. A similar pattern emerges for the statement, "I feel I am under a great deal of pressure most of the time," though the changes over time are not as large nor as precisely estimated as those that tap the inability to relax.

Specification Checks

Several specification checks are modeled to ensure the robustness of the main results. The results are not reported in the tables, but all findings discussed here are available from the author upon request.

Recall that the main results are based on samples of women (married, unmarried, with children, and without them) who are between the ages of 18 and 64 and have less than a bachelor's degree. The first set of robustness checks runs the model on slightly different versions of the analysis sample and uses a more restrictive educational criterion: women with a high school degree or less. Doing so enables analysis of the effect of trends (eq. [1]) and time period (eq. [2]) on a group of women who are more likely than members of the main sample to receive means-tested assistance. If the main results are in fact due to recent changes in tax and transfer programs, estimates from this specification should be similar to or larger than the main results. Results from this exercise conform to this expectation. In the second set, the age criterion is adjusted to include only those women between ages 18 and 45. Given that low-skilled women in this age range are particularly likely to receive means-tested assistance, estimates from this sample should also be larger

than the main results.[17] Once again, the estimates produce evidence in favor of this pattern.[18]

Given that both sets of analyses are conducted over a 20-year period, another concern is the presence of differential changes in the characteristics of treatment and comparison group women. For example, single mothers over the last 2 decades became more likely to be classified as never-married than as divorced, separated, or widowed, and never-married women became more likely to obtain higher levels of education (Herbst 2008). If left unaccounted for, such compositional changes might confound the estimated effect of each policy reform time period. To mitigate the potential bias from unobserved compositional changes, the study estimates versions of equations (1) and (2) that include dummy variables for the cohort (i.e., year of birth).[19] In a further specification check, the cohort dummies are interacted with the term single_children and the controls for educational attainment. Together, these controls should capture the unobserved, cohort-specific determinants of subjective well-being that vary across the treatment and comparison groups. The results are robust to the inclusion of these additional controls.

The subjective well-being trends presented in tables 2 and 3 come from a linear parameterization. Modeling well-being trends in a purely linear framework may be too restrictive in analysis of a 20-year period. Therefore, the models are estimated with a quadratic in the time trend. The coefficient estimates consistently suggest that single mothers experienced declines in life satisfaction and health at a rapidly decreasing rate over time. The linear and quadratic trends are usually statistically significant for single mothers. Such findings are broadly consistent with the positive well-being changes that emerge in the postreform periods. The quadratic trends for single childless women and married mothers are usually statistically nonsignificant. This suggests that their well-being trends linearly (downward) between 1986 and 2005.

Finally, it is possible that the estimates reported in tables 5 and 6 are sensitive to the definitions used for the prereform, phase-in, and postreform periods. For example, the postreform period is defined to start in 1996, but only 24 states implemented their TANF plans in that year.

17. Placing this age restriction on the analysis sample also serves as an additional control for the effect of age on subjective well-being. Controlling for the effect is important given the large differences in age across the treatment and comparison groups. The author thanks an anonymous referee for suggesting this robustness check.

18. In a further specification check, both sample constraints (women with a high school degree or less and ages 18–45) are tested simultaneously. Results based on this sample are even stronger (i.e., single mothers reveal greater absolute and relative gains in subjective well-being) than those from the separate sample constraints.

19. A set of five dummy variables is created to indicate 10-year increments (approximately) in year of birth. The earliest cohort of sample members was born between 1922 and 1939; the latest cohort was born between 1970 and 1985. The cohorts in the intervening period are sorted in 10-year increments.

Another 26 states implemented TANF in 1997, and one state (California) did so in 1998 (Grogger and Karoly 2005). To test whether changes in the definitions of phase-in and postreform periods affect the results, an additional model defines the postreform period as starting in 1997 and another defines it as starting in 1998. Results from these models are qualitatively similar to those presented here. If anything, starting the postreform period in 1997 or 1998 tends to accentuate the positive life satisfaction results and diminish the negative physical and mental health results.

Discussion

The last several decades witnessed important changes to US tax and transfer programs. Although the specific policy tool and mode of administration differ dramatically across these reforms, each one seeks to encourage work and discourage welfare participation among single mothers. Indeed, a substantial empirical literature finds that welfare reform and the EITC, in particular, account for much of mothers' employment growth throughout the 1990s. In addition, a number of studies find increases in earnings, income, and consumption among some groups of single mothers. Nevertheless, researchers largely ignore the effect of recent policy changes on subjective well-being. This study therefore conducts a comprehensive analysis of single mothers' subjective well-being over the last several decades.

The results of this analysis can be summarized as follows. Across most domains of subjective well-being, single mothers experienced substantial well-being gaps between 1986 and 2005. The gaps are larger than those experienced by their single childless and married mother counterparts. However, single mothers make progress in closing these gaps, especially in the domain of global life satisfaction. The results suggest that most of the improvement in relative well-being comes after 1996, when welfare reform and the EITC expansions of the mid-1990s became fully implemented. Overall, the results indicate that low-skilled single mothers' global life satisfaction gap declines approximately 60 percent relative to low-skilled single, childless women and about 22 percent relative to low-skilled married mothers. These positive developments are somewhat lessened by results from measures of physical and mental health. Those estimates suggest that single mothers make no progress over the study period or experience declines relative to the comparison groups. Estimates from the three measures of physical health (self-reported physical condition, sleep quality, and prevalence of headaches) show little change from the pre- to the postreform period, but results from the measures of mental health (inability to relax and feelings of pressure) suggest that single mothers' condition worsens slightly after full implementation of the tax and transfer reforms.

Are these results consistent with the theoretical mechanisms through which tax and transfer programs are expected to influence disadvantaged mothers' subjective well-being? The passage of employment-based policies, such as welfare reform, the EITC, and child-care subsidies, is predicted to increase the opportunity costs associated with leisure time. As a result, the price of engaging in healthy behaviors, especially those demanding substantial time investments (e.g., exercise and the home production of meals), is predicted to rise. Such a rise in the time price of leisure is expected to delay healthy habits or lead to permanent behavioral changes that could reduce subjective well-being. There are, however, a number of potential employment-related benefits associated with these policy reforms. For example, increased access to high-quality health insurance options may offset some of the deleterious effects of working. Employment is also predicted to have substantial psychic and social benefits, ranging from declines in depression and anxiety to increases in self-esteem and personal control. These work-based policies also may increase well-being by reducing the stigma costs associated with long-term unemployment and program participation.

Results in this study lend some support to both sets of predictions. In particular, single mothers are found to experience relative gains across most indicators of life satisfaction and small (but inconsistent) declines in mental health. If these policy-induced changes in employment and income influence mothers' subjective well-being, improvements in life satisfaction may come at the cost of moderate increases in stress and anxiety. The most optimistic conclusion regarding single mothers' physical health is that the mid-1990s policy reforms do not appear to worsen these outcomes.

It is important to reiterate that this study examines the bundled (or overall) effects of what is essentially a policy regime change that unfolded throughout the 1990s but began to accelerate in the mid-1990s. Several catalysts may account for the relative changes in single mothers' well-being: the passage of welfare reform legislation in 1996, the EITC expansions in 1990 and 1993, steady increases in child-care subsidy expenditures throughout the 1990s, and the liberalization of Medicaid eligibility that began in the late 1980s. Sorting out which policies are primarily responsible for single mothers' quality-of-life improvements is an important avenue for future research. Indeed, individual policies may induce conflicting effects on subjective well-being that need to be differentiated.

Appendix

Table A1

SUMMARY STATISTICS OF THE DDB WORLDWIDE COMMUNICATIONS SAMPLE, 1986–2005

Variable	Single Mothers (1)	Single Childless Women (2)	Married Mothers (3)
Age (years)	35.35 (9.34)	43.64 (12.81)	35.59 (7.79)
White (%)	.603 (.489)	.786 (.409)	.852 (.354)
Black (%)	.305 (.460)	.144 (.352)	.059 (.236)
Other race or ethnicity (%)	.091 (.288)	.068 (.253)	.087 (.282)
Household size (no. persons)	3.421 (1.297)	1.744 (1.043)	4.142 (1.044)
Less than high school (%)	.098 (.298)	.062 (.242)	.051 (.220)
High school or GED (%)	.347 (.476)	.280 (.449)	.333 (.471)
Some college (%)	.406 (.491)	.342 (.474)	.342 (.474)
BA or more (%)	.147 (.354)	.313 (.463)	.272 (.445)
Employed (%)	.762 (.425)	.811 (.391)	.654 (.475)
Household income:			
<$30,000	.733 (.442)	.581 (.493)	.282 (.450)
$30,000–$49,999	.169 (.375)	.241 (.427)	.314 (.464)
$50,000–$69,999	.058 (.234)	.100 (.300)	.209 (.407)
$70,000–$99,999	.027 (.163)	.053 (.224)	.126 (.332)
≥$100,000	.010 (.101)	.023 (.152)	.066 (.248)

NOTE.—GED = general equivalency diploma; BA = bachelor's degree. Standard deviations are in parentheses.

Note

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Ending Access as We Know It: State Welfare Benefit Coverage in the TANF Era

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Much of the quantitative literature evaluating welfare reform focuses on caseloads. In order to contextualize caseload declines, the current study examines a closely related measure of welfare coverage: the ratio of children receiving welfare assistance to children in poverty. A multilevel model approach is employed to investigate state-level factors that have contributed to declines in coverage. The findings suggest that welfare coverage has fallen the most in states with higher levels of coverage prereform, ideologically conservative governments, Republican governors, and larger proportions of African American welfare recipients. In addition, this study identifies specific policies and administrative practices that are associated with falling coverage and reveals a substantial erosion of the traditionally countercyclical relationship between unemployment and welfare provision since reform. By the late 2000s, the policy choices that embody welfare reform have produced both historically low levels of welfare coverage nationally and unprecedented diversity in benefit accessibility across states.

In his speech accepting the Democratic nomination for President of the United States, William Clinton promised to "end welfare as we know it" (*New York Times* 1992). One of the main problems with the Aid to Families with Dependent Children program (AFDC), according to Clinton and others in favor of dramatic reform, was that it encouraged dependency (O'Connor 2000). Advocates of reform viewed welfare dependency as both the cause and effect of a variety of social ills, including teenage pregnancy, crime, and low labor-market participation among racial and ethnic minorities. In creating the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families program (TANF), the Personal Responsibility and Work

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Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 (PRWORA; 110 Stat. 2105) codified this rhetoric about the ills of dependency. "End[ing] the dependence of needy parents on government benefits by promoting job preparation, work, and marriage" is listed as one of the four main goals of the new program (110 Stat. 2113 [1996]).

With dependency framed as a problematic consequence of welfare provision, caseload reduction became the primary metric of welfare reform's effectiveness. As caseloads declined dramatically following reform, many media commentators, regardless of political orientation, viewed these declines as an indication that welfare reform did something right (Besharov 2006; Clinton 2006; Jencks, Swingle, and Winship 2006; Kim and Rector 2006; *New York Times* 2006). Academics also contributed to this debate, studying why caseloads fell so quickly after the institution of TANF (Council of Economic Advisors 1997, 1999; Martini and Wiseman 1997; Mead 2000; Schoeni and Blank 2000; Ziliak et al. 2000; Blank 2001; Danielson and Klerman 2008).

The current study explores the long-term consequences of reform for the adequacy and responsiveness of state welfare (TANF) programs. Access to cash assistance declined dramatically after reform. A 2008 Congressional Research Service report finds that, in 2007, one-third of single mothers in poverty were both unemployed and not receiving cash benefits, over twice the proportion in this situation in 1995 (Burke, Gabe, and Falk 2008). Studies examining levels or change in state caseloads can provide insight into these developments, but caseload measures are not ideal indicators of welfare state adequacy. The primary issue is that it is difficult to interpret the meaning of a caseload decline without assessing whether need is declining as well. In the following, the authors hope to help shift the focus of the welfare reform debate toward questions of welfare state adequacy and away from discussions of dependency and caseloads. Following the work of Marcia Meyers, Janet Gornick, and Laura Peck (2002), this study employs a different measure as the dependent variable in the analyses: the number of state welfare child cases relative to the number of children in poverty, a measure of welfare coverage.

The research on caseload changes since welfare reform is dominated by debate about the extent to which caseload declines are a consequence of economic or policy changes. This framing, combined with an empirical focus on the uniquely strong economic growth following reform in the late 1990s, obfuscates important transformations in access to welfare services and enables, however unintentionally, the development of unqualified narratives about the success of welfare reform. Examining the performance of TANF through the lens of a coverage measure may suggest alternative narratives.

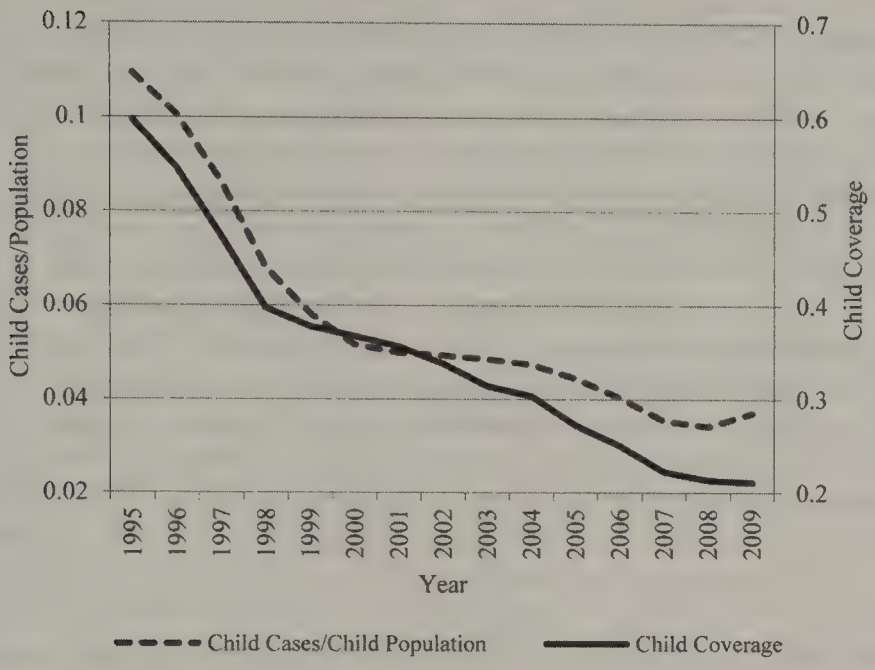


FIG. 1.—States' average number of children receiving welfare and states' average welfare coverage for children, 1995–2009.

Coverage versus Caseloads

In this study, the focus on welfare coverage over caseloads deserves some further elaboration. Figure 1 presents national trends for both measures since welfare reform. Specifically, this figure displays the mean of the number of children receiving welfare in each state (recipients of benefits from AFDC, TANF, and SSPs [Separate State Programs]) as well as the mean of state child coverage rates between 1995 and 2009. Separate State Programs are TANF-like programs funded by states and administered by state TANF offices, but these programs were exempt from many federal TANF policies, such as time limits and work requirements, until TANF was reauthorized in 2006. Many states have used SSPs to varying degrees to provide assistance to families outside of the framework (and, some argue, the constraints) of TANF. The child caseload measure is the ratio of the average monthly number of children receiving assistance to the total number of children in a state. Child coverage is the ratio of the average monthly number of children receiving assistance to the total number of children in poverty in a state.

If caseload decline is the sole measure of success, then welfare reform has been an extraordinary triumph. Nationally, the total number of children receiving welfare declined 65 percent between 1996 and 2007. At the state level, there is substantial variation in the magnitude of

caseload decline. In a handful of states (Florida, Georgia, Idaho, Illinois, Louisiana, Mississippi, and Wyoming), child caseloads declined by over 80 percent between 1996 and 2007. Caseloads did increase in response to the 2007–9 recession; total child caseloads rose nearly 13 percent between 2008 and 2010. Similarly, average welfare coverage fell dramatically nationwide, with individual states converging on historically low rates of coverage. In contrast to caseload trends, whether measured at the national level or as state averages, child coverage decreased every year since reform, even falling through the 2001 and 2007–9 recessions.

A simultaneous examination of the two measures is instructive. For example, declines in coverage between 1995 and 1998 appear to be driven largely by falling caseloads and not by reductions in poverty. The drop in caseloads continues from 1998 until the 2001 recession, but the decline in coverage moderates substantially in these years. This is a result of the considerable drop in poverty during the very late 1990s. However, the fact that coverage continues to decline in these years indicates that the decline in caseloads is more than that warranted by the declines in poverty and unemployment alone. Finally, although child caseloads stabilize for a few years during and following the 2001 recession, and even increase in 2009 and 2010, coverage falls through both of these recessionary periods. These trends indicate that caseloads did not keep pace with the increase in child poverty during either recession.

This is a key advantage of the coverage measure, as it enables the assessment that the dramatic caseload declines, especially in the very late 1990s, are not driven solely by falling poverty in the context of a tight labor market. Further, reliance on a caseload measure could lead one to overestimate the adequacy of state responses to postreform recessions. However, the differences between these two measures should not be overstated, as they are closely related, have identical numerators, and display similar overall trends. At the state level, the measure of child coverage and the ratio of child cases to child population are highly correlated ($r = .85$). It is important to stress that the use of a coverage measure is not intended to be a methodological contribution; the coverage ratio is not presented as a more accurate measure of some common underlying concept than caseloads. Instead, the coverage measure is considered a better indicator of the adequacy and responsiveness of TANF. Consequently, this study is not a direct extension of research examining caseloads; rather, it focuses on the specific question of the determinants of change in program adequacy since reform. The authors expect that the factors influencing coverage are not necessarily identical to those that affect caseloads.[1]

1. While tangential to this study's primary research questions, analyses were run examining the determinants of change in the child caseload to child population ratio in

The coverage measure is desirable for several other reasons. On a descriptive level, it is more intuitively informative and accessible than the measure of caseloads. In 2009, nearly 4 percent of all children participated in TANF or an SSP. The child coverage ratio for the same year was .21. The coverage measure allows an immediate assessment of the extent of program use relative to need, something that is not possible with a caseload measure. This limitation of caseload measures is exacerbated if one wishes to examine changes in caseloads or to make comparisons over time. Caseload numbers are sensitive to the size of the population eligible for benefits, and that population fluctuates in response to changing economic conditions. Focusing on coverage allows one to partially control for the mechanistic changes in eligibility, and consequent changes in caseload volume, created by macroeconomic fluctuations.

Variation across States

While all states have experienced declines in coverage since 1995, within this national trend trajectories of change in coverage vary substantially across states. Figure 2 displays welfare coverage rates for children in five states from 1995 to 2009. Coverage declines substantially in California and Alabama, but both states maintain their customary positions at the extremes of a now compressed spectrum of welfare adequacy. Illinois, on the other hand, experienced dramatic reductions in coverage through the 2001 recession, and these declines substantially change its rank order in level of coverage. Cumulatively, these state-level changes constitute a trend of nationwide convergence upon lower levels of welfare coverage.

In the context of federal policy constraints, a broad mandate to reduce caseloads, and falling coverage nationwide, why have some states reduced welfare coverage more substantially than others? The 2001 recession, the subsequent weak recovery, and the intensity and duration of the 2007–9 recession have provided dramatic tests of TANF's re-

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addition to the analyses of child coverage provided below. While many of the results are similar, the findings are not identical and differ in noteworthy manners. In particular, a number of key factors of interest are statistically significant in one analysis and not the other. Further, comparisons of standardized coefficients across models indicate that the magnitude of effects vary substantially between these different dependent variables. This may lead one to either overstate or understate the impact of a particular factor. For example, states with larger proportions of African Americans receiving welfare benefits experienced statistically significant and substantial declines in both child cases and child coverage. However, the estimate of the effect of caseload racial composition is nearly twice as large in the caseload analysis as the coverage analysis, even when controlling for child poverty and state unemployment rates. What this suggests is that a substantial portion of the reduction in caseloads in states with more African American welfare recipients is attributable to falling child poverty in those states.

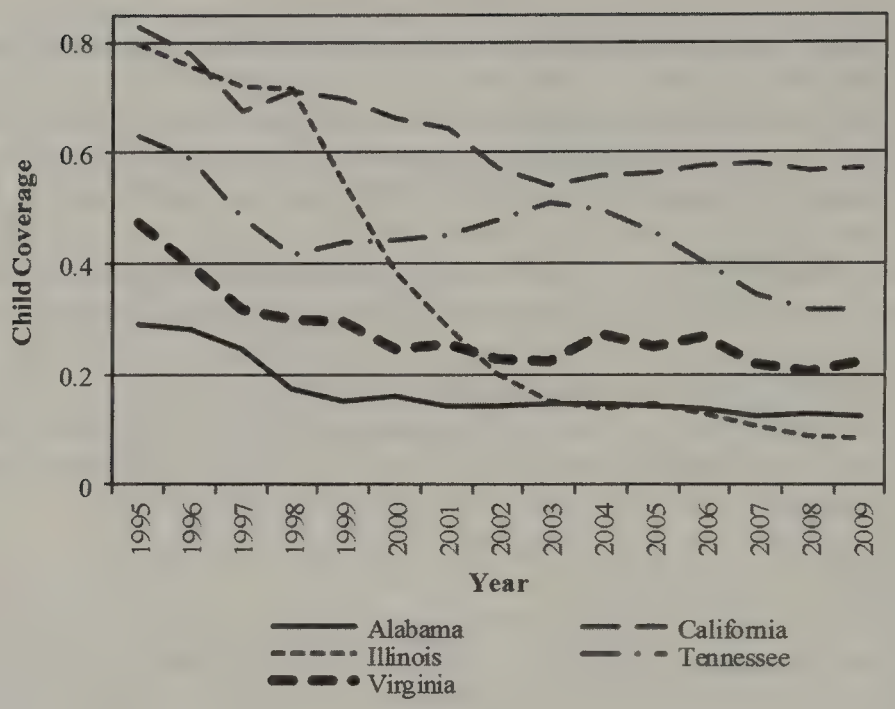


FIG. 2.—Welfare coverage for children, selected states, 1995–2009

sponsiveness to increases in poverty. Overall, the impact of these economic downturns on coverage has been surprisingly weak, although individual states exhibit significant variation in their responses to increases in poverty.

The current study seeks to explain this variation by examining the factors that have shaped state-level trajectories of change in coverage following reform. The manner in which state political and economic conditions as well as policy changes and changes in administrative practices have influenced these trajectories is investigated using a form of hierarchical linear modeling for longitudinal analyses, the multilevel model for change. This study contributes to the debate over recent changes in welfare provision on a number of levels. First, the following exploration of the determinants of changes in coverage in the TANF era is the most extensive to date. The vast majority of research on caseload decline is confined to the 1990s. The period examined here covers both the 2001 and 2007–9 recessions, allowing the authors to assess how welfare reform affected coverage in both the late 1990s and during the economically turbulent 2000s. Second, the modeling approach utilized here permits a more detailed examination of the effects of time-invariant factors, especially stable, state political and racial characteristics, than is possible in the approaches utilized in many studies.

Potential Determinants of Coverage

Little research specifically examines AFDC or TANF benefit coverage. Meyers and associates (2001, 2002) find that coverage declined dramatically in the 1994–98 period, but they do not explore the causes of these changes. The literature on caseloads, broad studies of welfare generosity and retrenchment, and research examining states' TANF policy choices and administrative practices suggest additional factors that may influence welfare coverage.

Following an unusual rise in the early 1990s, AFDC caseloads began a dramatic and unprecedented decline in 1994 (Blank 2001, 2002). A 1997 Council of Economic Advisors report on this decline triggered the development of the caseload literature. The report concludes: "The estimates provided here suggest that over 40 percent of the decline in welfare receipt between 1993 and 1996 may be attributed to the falling unemployment rate and almost one-third can be attributed to the waivers" (1997, 11); that is, to policy changes. Continuing in the mold set by the 1997 report, several studies (e.g., Wallace and Blank 1999; Blank 2001, 2002) find that the economy and policy are both important to explaining caseload decline. However, James Ziliak and colleagues (2000) find that policy has a negligible effect and that the strong economy of the late 1990s was a primary driver of the caseload decline. Developing an index that characterizes the strength of state-level TANF sanctions, Robert Rector and Sarah Youssef (1999) find substantially larger declines in caseloads between 1997 and 1998 in states with stricter sanctions. Using this same index, Joe Soss and associates (2001) report similar findings based on their examination of changes in caseloads between 1997 and 1999.

This literature suggests that economic factors likely play a central role in explaining caseload decline and that policy and political variables may also be important. Most of the scholars who study caseload decline do not include political variables, but those who do find statistically significant effects. Rebecca Blank (2001), for example, finds that the presence of Republican governors and partisan control of the state legislature by either party reduce AFDC and TANF caseloads. Political factors are prominent in research examining the determinants of state policy content under TANF. The wide range of punitive and disciplinary policy features incorporated in state TANF programs is directly relevant to explaining coverage, as states that implemented more stringent policies would be expected to be more likely to restrict access to TANF. Matthew Fellowes and Gretchen Rowe (2004) find that liberal citizen and government ideology as well as the proportion of Democrats in the state legislature all reduce the stringency of state eligibility requirements under TANF. Similarly, Soss and colleagues (2001) find that liberal government ideology reduces the strength of state sanctions under TANF.

However, in more recent work, Soss, Richard Fording, and Sanford Schram (2011) find that party control and state government ideology provide no leverage in explaining whether states adopted a wide variety of TANF policies ranging from harsher sanctions and more rigid work requirements to restrictive eligibility standards. This stands in contrast to their extensive research, which indicates that partisan control of state governments is consistently a primary factor shaping changes in a variety of features of state welfare programs, including AFDC benefit levels and the adoption of AFDC waivers, in the decades preceding reform. This development leads Soss and colleagues (2011) to suggest that welfare reform may have fundamentally altered the forces shaping state welfare provision. In addition to state political context, the two other primary forces that have been central to shaping state action and policy choices in regard to welfare provision are the racial composition of states (and welfare recipients) and market wages for low-income workers.

The existence of multiple and pervasive effects of race on welfare provision, both historically and today, is one of the most consistent findings in research examining welfare benefits and state policy choices (Soss et al. 2011). In terms of TANF policies specifically, states with higher percentages of African American residents tend to implement more restrictive policies (Soss et al. 2001; Fellowes and Rowe 2004). Further, Soss and colleagues (2011) find that across all dimensions of TANF policy choices examined, ranging from strength of sanctions to eligibility standards, states with larger proportions of African Americans receiving benefits were more likely to adopt stringent or restrictive policies.

Local labor-market conditions, in particular the level of demand and wages for low-skilled labor, are also argued to be central to the character of welfare accessibility and generosity (Piven and Cloward 1971; Soss et al. 2011). In the decades preceding reform, changes in AFDC benefits were strongly associated with the ratio of benefits to average wages for low-skilled workers (Soss et al. 2011). Further, Soss and colleagues find that, in the early 2000s, patterns of TANF sanctions in Florida counties were strongly related to local unemployment rates and demand for low-wage labor. Broadly speaking, such labor market impacts are argued to operate on a "principle of less eligibility," in which access to benefits and the generosity of benefits are limited in manners that ensure welfare remains less attractive or accessible than the lowest-paying jobs within local labor markets (Piven and Cloward 1971, 35).

Finally, a handful of studies examine the effects of changes in administrative practice under TANF, in particular the rise in both formal and informal diversion practices. Formal diversion practices may take the form of the offer of one-time, lump-sum payments. In exchange for such payments, recipients agree to forego TANF eligibility for a specified period. Other diversion programs assist applicants in utilizing publicly or privately provided services other than TANF (Ridzi and London 2006). While there

are no systematic figures on the number of applicants diverted nationwide, a number of case studies suggest that utilization of diversion strategies is widespread and in some cases aggressive. Drawing upon studies from four states, Rebecca London (2003) reports increases in the numbers of diverted recipients and expansion of the use of one-time cash assistance, although in all locations, less than 10 percent of all cases were diverted. In a study of 2,400 low-income families living in Boston, Chicago, and San Antonio, Robert Moffitt (2003) finds that diversion experiences are extremely common. Finally, Frank Ridzi and Andrew London (2006) discover that an overwhelming number of formal and informal diversion practices have been integrated into the TANF intake process in West County, New York.

Efforts to shift TANF recipients onto the caseloads of different government programs parallel these diversion tactics and represent another change in administrative practice. Specifically, studies suggest that welfare reform has provided incentives for both individuals and state governments to make greater use of the Supplemental Security Income program (SSI) over TANF. The incentive for individual recipients is that SSI payments are higher than those from TANF, and SSI does not impose work requirements or time limits. For state governments, there are strong formal incentives to reduce TANF caseloads but not SSI caseloads. In addition, some argue that states have a financial incentive to encourage movement from TANF to SSI, as SSI is financed entirely by federal funds (Nadel, Wamhoff, and Wiseman 2003–4; Schmidt and Sevak 2004; Wamhoff and Wiseman 2005–6).

Data and Hypotheses

The data set compiled for this study contains annual observations on 50 states for a 14-year period (1995–2009), and the various models discussed below examine change in coverage over three periods: 1995–2009 (the entire period), 1995–2000, and 2000–2009. The dependent variable in these analyses is an annual measure of welfare coverage for children, which is the number of children, in an average month, receiving AFDC, TANF, or SSP benefits relative to the number of children in poverty in that state. The primary reason for focusing on the number of children receiving assistance is to obtain an assessment of the adequacy of program participation relative, roughly, to the size of the population served by the program. The vast majority of recipients of TANF funds are children, and the proportion of recipients who are children has increased over time with the rise in the number of child-only cases that do not have an adult recipient (US Government Accountability Office 2011). In 1995, child recipients constituted 68 percent of all AFDC recipients; by 2007, the proportion of child recipients of TANF had risen to 77 percent (SSA [Social Security Administration] 1997; US

Department of Health and Human Services [USDHHS] 2009*b*). Operationalizing the coverage measure as the ratio of the total number of child recipients to the total number of poor children comes much closer to assessing the TANF caseload relative to the target population than a ratio of the total number of recipients to the total number of individuals under the poverty line. The data for the average monthly number of children receiving AFDC, TANF, and SSP benefits are drawn from two sources. The *Annual Statistical Supplement* to the *Social Security Bulletin* provides data for the years 1994–99 (SSA 1994–1999). For the years 2000–2009, TANF and SSP caseload data come from the USDHHS Administration for Children and Families (2009*a*–2009*d*, 2010*a*–2010*p*).

An ideal measure of coverage would be the ratio of the total number of child TANF recipients to the total number of poor children in single-parent households. Unfortunately, state-level estimates of the number of poor children in single-parent households suffer from measurement error as a consequence of focusing on such a small segment of the population. This issue is especially problematic in the context of less populous states, where sample sizes are small. Instead, for this study, the best available state-level estimates of child poverty, the Census Bureau's Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates, are used as the denominator in the coverage ratio (US Census Bureau 2011). The Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates have the additional benefit of accounting for the influence of taxes and tax credits on household incomes. Given multiple constraints and considerations, the authors feel strongly that this specific construction of the coverage variable is the best possible for assessing welfare adequacy over time and across states.[2]

States have responded to welfare reforms in two ways that complicate efforts to accurately characterize the extent to which states are providing assistance. The first involves state use of SSPs following the 1996 reform, which many states created in order to provide a broader level of assistance than was possible within the constraints of federal TANF guidelines. States could create SSPs that were funded solely by the state but administered by TANF agencies to meet federal maintenance-of-effort requirements. Despite the increased cost associated with creating and operating these programs, states had an incentive to utilize SSPs, as families and children receiving support through SSPs were not considered to be receiving TANF assistance, were not subject to a number of TANF requirements (including work participation requirements), and were not included in the calculation of state work-participation targets (Cohen 2006; SSA 2008*a*).

Unfortunately, data on SSP caseloads are only available beginning in

2. The authors also considered examining caseloads as a proportion of the eligible population, because eligibility criteria are determined at the state level and vary widely across states. This approach is rejected, however, because eligibility criteria affect the extent to which assistance reaches the poor (in this case, poor children). Instead, a measure of eligibility thresholds is included as an independent variable.

2000. While the majority of states either did not use, or made only very limited use of, SSPs prior to 2000, there are a handful of states that did make use of SSPs before 2000. An examination of figure 1 suggests that, at the national level at least, the inclusion of SSP cases in the coverage ratio in 2000 does not produce a disruptive jump in coverage estimates. In order to control for any artificial increase in coverage due to the lack of data on SSP cases prior to 2000, a dummy variable for the year 2000 is included in the 1995–2009 period analyses.[3]

A second complication results from how state policy makers have responded to additional extensions of TANF requirements contained in the Deficit Reduction Act of 2005 (120 Stat. 4 [2006]). While many states explicitly created SSPs in order to meet TANF work requirements, the Deficit Reduction Act reduces the capacity for states to utilize SSPs for this purpose by requiring states to include SSP cases in their work-participation calculations as of October 2006. In response, some states have shifted from using SSPs to solely state-funded programs (SSFs), which are not funded with maintenance-of-effort dollars and consequently are not included in states' work participation calculations (Schott and Parrott 2009). As the programs are completely state funded, there are no federal reporting requirements and no systematic federal data on SSF caseloads.

This is potentially a serious problem for a study of state welfare adequacy, given that the creation of SSFs represents a direct effort by states to increase benefit access and that use of SSFs has increased since the onset of the 2007–9 recession. Danilo Trisi and LaDonna Pavetti (2012) collect data on total TANF, SSP, and SSF caseloads directly from state agencies, as opposed to from the USDHHS. These data are on total cases, and it is not possible to distinguish child cases. In order to assess the consequences of excluding child recipients of SSF funds in this study, an estimate of total child cases is generated for each year after 2005. The estimates use the degree of change in total cases in the Trisi and Pavetti (2012) data.[4] These estimates are created for the 25 states that implemented SSF programs by 2009 (Schott and Parrott 2009). For the years 2006–9, the correlation is very high ($r = .95$) between the coverage measure used in the analyses below and the estimate of total coverage using the Trisi and Pavetti (2012) data. Further, the fact that the results of models using either measure are nearly identical (and do not differ in terms of any of the central findings) provides reassurance that the inclusion of SSF recipients would not alter this study's conclusions.

3. In addition, for the states that made use of SSPs in 2000, estimates of SSP cases between 2000 and 1997 were created using a linear interpolation. The inclusion of these estimated SSP cases in the coverage ratio produces results that are identical to those presented below.

4. Trends in child cases are projected using 2005 child caseload numbers. For example, if total caseloads in a state increase by 5 percent between 2005 and 2006 in the Trisi and Pavetti (2012) data, then 2006 child caseloads are estimated to be 5 percent higher than their level in 2005.

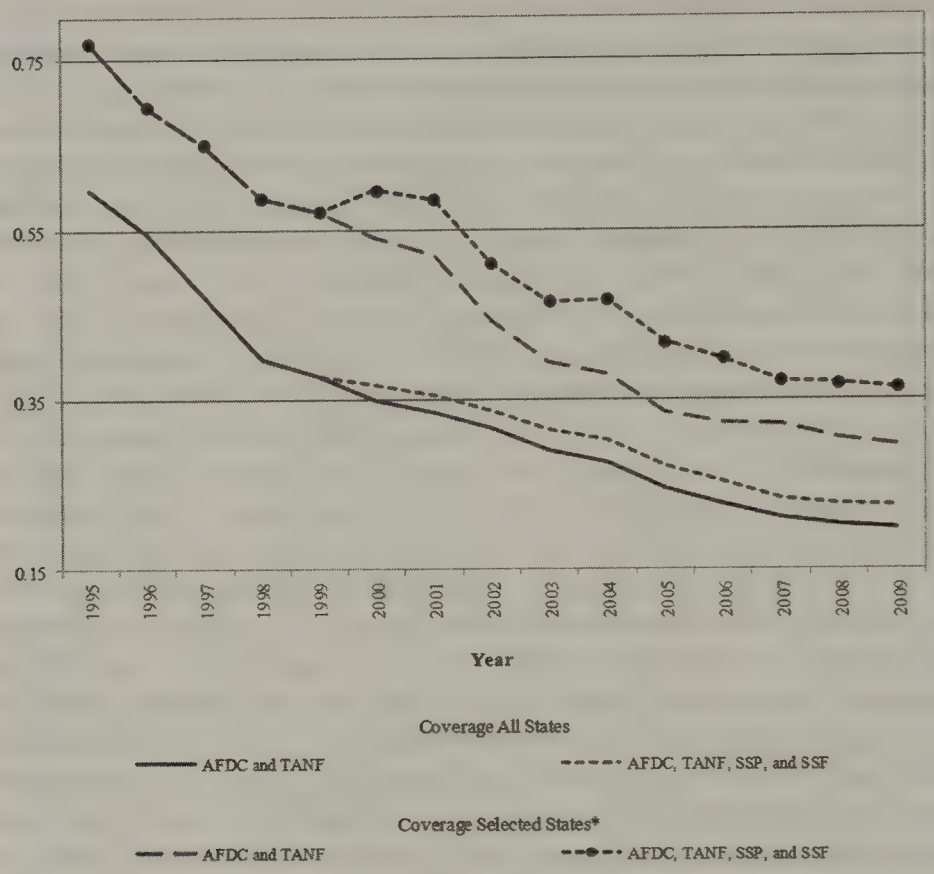


FIG. 3.—Average AFDC and TANF coverage vs. average AFDC, TANF, SSP, and SSF coverage for all states and selected states. AFDC = Aid to Families with Dependent Children program; TANF = Temporary Assistance for Needy Families program; SSP = separate state programs; SSF = solely state-funded programs. * Inclusion of SSP recipients increases AFDC and TANF coverage measure by 5 percent or more in 14 states: California, Connecticut, Hawaii, Iowa, Maine, Maryland, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, New York, Rhode Island, Vermont, Virginia, and Washington.

Figure 3 illustrates the contribution of state use of SSPs and SSFs to national coverage rates by comparing average state AFDC and TANF coverage to a measure of coverage that includes SSP and estimated SSF child cases in the numerator. In addition, this figure provides an illustration of the portion of coverage attributable to SSP and SSF cases in a subset of 14 states in which the inclusion of SSP recipients increases their coverage ratio by 5 percent or more in any year. Nationally, the use of either SSPs or SSF programs only increases coverage rates marginally. However, for a relatively small number of states, the use of SSPs or SSF programs has allowed these states to cover a significantly larger portion of the poor (e.g., coverage rates increase 10 percentage points or more with the inclusion of SSP recipients in Hawaii, Maine, Minnesota, Nebraska, New York, Rhode Island, and Virginia).

The independent variables in the following analyses may be roughly grouped in four distinct categories: measures of economic factors, political and racial context, TANF policy content, and administrative practices. Definitions and sources for all variables are listed in table 1.

Economic Factors

One of the most consistent and robust findings from the caseload literature is the crucial role that strong economic growth played in the reduction of caseloads during the late 1990s (Council of Economic Advisors 1997; Wallace and Blank 1999; Ziliak et al. 2000; Blank 2001). The composition of the coverage variable partially controls for caseload fluctuations driven by changes in the state of the local economy. However, the authors expect that unemployment will still exert considerable influence on coverage, as high unemployment may increase the depth of poverty for poor families or push the working poor out of the labor market. These conditions are expected to increase application for and receipt of benefits but would be poorly captured by the poverty measure in the coverage ratio. Further, the authors expect that state welfare offices may fluctuate between leniency during economic downturns and more stringent approaches when unemployment is very low. As such, high unemployment is expected to increase coverage as both need and application for, and possibly receipt of, benefits increase.

This analysis examines a number of additional economic factors, including the female employment-to-population ratio, real per-capita income, real per-capita revenue, and average earnings in low-wage occupations. As low-income women increasingly enter the workforce, either pulled by the strong economy or pushed by welfare reform, the authors expect that a higher female employment-to-population ratio will either result in higher coverage rates as the size of the population in poverty (the denominator in the coverage ratio) decreases or will have no influence on coverage as both cases and poverty decline simultaneously. It should be noted that this factor in particular is potentially endogenous given that TANF policies may affect both welfare coverage and the employment-to-population ratio. There is also a possibility of reciprocal causation between these two factors. To address the latter issue, the female employment-to-population ratio is lagged by one year.[5] This issue of endogeneity is addressed in greater detail in the discussion of the modeling approaches below.

Following the literature on welfare benefit generosity, wealthier states, measured by real per-capita income and real per-capita revenue, are

5. The former issue is more difficult to address. Duncan and Raudenbush (1999) suggest that one way to deal with endogeneity in the context of multilevel models is to control, if possible, for the relevant omitted factor. In the analyses below, variables are introduced that characterize various TANF policy characteristics expected to affect welfare coverage.

Table 1

DEFINITIONS AND DATA SOURCES

Variable	Definition	Source
Dependent variable:		
Welfare coverage for children	Ratio of no. of children receiving AFDC, TANF, or SSP benefits to no. of children in poor families	SSA 1994–1999; USDHHS 2009*a*–2009*d*, 2010*a*–2010*p*; US Census Bureau 2011
Independent variable:		
Economic, policy, and racial factors:		
Unemployment	Unemployment rate	US Bureau of Labor Statistics, n.d.
Female employment-to-population ratio	No. of women employed divided by total female civilian noninstitutional population 16 years and older	US Census Bureau 1997–2001, 2003*a*, 2003*b*, 2004–2009
Per capita income	Total real personal income divided by total population	US Bureau of Economic Analysis 2012
Per capita revenue (2009 $)	Total real state revenue divided by total population	US Census Bureau 1997–2001, 2003*a*, 2003*b*, 2004–2009; US Bureau of Economic Analysis, n.d.
Avg. earnings in low-wage occupations	Avg. earnings for employees in the following SIC occupation categories: Agricultural services; General merchandise stores; Food stores; Apparel and accessory stores; Furniture, home furnishings and equipment stores; Eating and drinking places; Miscellaneous retail; Hotels and other lodging places; Motion pictures; and Amusement and recreation services Monthly wages calculated: ([total payroll for first quarter]/3)/total no. of employees for mid-March pay period	County Business Patterns 1995–2009 (US Census Bureau 2012*a*–2012*o*)
Liberal government ideology	Based on interest groups' ratings of congresspersons and their vote shares (see Berry et al. [1998] for details)	Berry et al. 1998; Fording 2010
Republican governor	0 = governor is not Republican; 1 = governor is Republican	US Census Bureau 1997–2001, 2003*a*–2009
% welfare caseload African American	% of state welfare caseload African American	USDHHS 1996, 2002

TANF policy content:		
Strength of sanctions	1 = weak; 2 = moderate; 3 = strong	USDHHS 1998–2000, 2002–2004, 2006, 2009*e*
Policy severity index	1 = one policy is more restrictive or punitive than federal requirements; 2 = two policies are more restrictive; 3 = all three policies are more restrictive	Rowe 2000; Rowe, McManus, and Roberts 2004; Rowe and Roberts 2004; Rowe and Russell 2004; Rowe and Versteeg 2005; Rowe and Murphy 2006, 2009; Rowe, Murphy, and Williamson 2006*a*, 2006*b*; Rowe, Murphy, and Kaminski 2008; Rowe, Murphy, and Mon 2010; Kassabian et al. 2011
Administrative practice:		
Formal diversion payments	0 = no program; 1 = program	Rowe 2000; Rowe et al. 2004; Rowe and Roberts 2004; Rowe and Russell 2004; Rowe and Versteeg 2005; Rowe and Murphy 2006, 2009; Rowe et al. 2006*a*, 2006*b*; Rowe et al. 2008; Rowe et al. 2010; Kassabian et al. 2011
Real max. initial income eligibility (2008 $)	Inflation-adjusted max. income threshold for initial eligibility for a family of three	Rowe 2000; Rowe et al. 2004; Rowe and Roberts 2004; Rowe and Russell 2004; Rowe and Versteeg 2005; Rowe and Murphy 2006, 2009; Rowe et al. 2006*a*, 2006*b*; Rowe et al. 2008; Rowe et al. 2010; Kassabian et al. 2011
SSI caseload	No. of SSI recipients divided by total state population	SSA 1994–1999, 2000–2002, 2004–2007, 2008*b*, 2009–2011

NOTE.—AFDC = Aid to Families with Dependent Children program; TANF = Temporary Assistance for Needy Families program; avg. = average; SSP = Separate State Program; SSA = Social Security Administration; SSI = Supplemental Security Income program; max. = maximum; SIC = Standard Industrial Classification; USDHHS = US Department of Health and Human Services.

expected to have higher levels of coverage (Tweedie 1994; Ribar and Wilhelm 1999). Finally, in order to explore the possibility that changes in coverage are related to local labor market conditions, models include a variable capturing the average earnings in low-wage occupations within states. Following Soss and colleagues (2011), this variable is comprised of average monthly earnings in a variety of low-wage occupations (listed in table 1). Given the demonstrated influence of the principle of less eligibility in the pre-TANF era, states with lower wages in less desirable occupations are expected to more substantially reduce coverage.

Political and Racial Context

In order to address the effect of the ideological and partisan composition of states on changes in coverage, all models include a measure of liberal government ideology and a dummy variable that indicates whether the state had a Republican governor in the previous year. The government ideology measure aggregates information on individual state governors and legislators. It places state governments on a scale in which higher values indicate more liberal governments and lower values indicate more conservative governments (Berry et al. 1998; Fording 2010).[6] The authors expect that states with more liberal governments will exhibit slower decreases in coverage rates. Following Blank's (2001) work, it is also expected that states with Republican governors will experience more substantial decreases in coverage.

Finally, broadly speaking, a large body of research argues that race is a central and highly salient factor influencing the structure, logic, and policy choices embodied in state approaches to welfare provision (e.g., Quadagno 1994; Wacquant 2009; Soss et al. 2011). More specifically, multiple studies demonstrate a strong relationship between the restrictiveness of TANF sanctions and state racial composition (Schram, Soss, and Fording 2003; Soss et al. 2011). Similarly, Soss and associates (2011) find that states with larger proportions of African American benefit recipients are more likely to adopt more punitive and exclusionary TANF policies. Given this research, the authors expect that the racial composition of a state's welfare caseload may influence the rate of coverage decline in that state. To investigate this, the authors include the percentage of the state welfare recipients that are African American.

Policy Content

The next two variables address variation in state TANF policy characteristics or programs; one examines the strength of a state's welfare sanctions, and the other measures whether a state's reform policies are more restrictive or punitive than federal requirements. First, the authors

6. This study draws upon the revised 1960–2008 government ideology data.

follow Rector and Youssef (1999) in constructing a trichotomous index that characterizes the strength of sanctions imposed by a state for a benefit recipient's noncompliance with work requirements. Loss of all benefits at the first instance of noncompliance is considered a strong sanction. If a recipient may eventually lose all benefits after repeated instances of noncompliance, the sanction is considered moderate. Finally, if a partial reduction of benefits is the harshest consequence for repeated noncompliance, the sanction is considered weak.

For the second of the two variables, the authors follow Soss and associates (2001) in constructing an index indicating the extent to which states adopted reform policies that were more restrictive or punitive than federal requirements. This policy severity index is the sum of three dichotomous variables: (1) whether a state adopted a work requirement stricter than the federal requirement,[7] (2) whether a state adopted a time limit shorter than the federal 60-month lifetime limit, and (3) whether a state instituted a family cap.[8]

Administrative Practice

Three measures are included to capture how states have responded to the incentives and pressures built into welfare reform at the level of administrative practices. First, while it is difficult to obtain measures of the multiple diversion practices employed at the level of welfare offices, it is possible to indicate whether a state has a formal diversion payment program. The authors expect that states with an institutionalized option to divert applicants with lump-sum payments will exhibit more substantial reductions in coverage than states without such programs.

Second, states have exhibited substantial variation in their maximum income-eligibility thresholds. These thresholds indicate the maximum income that a family of three can receive and remain eligible for program participation and benefits. These thresholds are important to both levels of coverage and change in welfare coverage over time. In terms of levels, states with high income-eligibility thresholds likely have higher coverage than states with low income-eligibility thresholds, as benefits are available to a larger swath of the population, including some residents whose incomes may not be below the poverty line. In the case of change in these thresholds over time, reductions in thresholds reduce the size of the population eligible for benefits. Consequently, the authors expect that declines in coverage will occur more slowly in states with higher income-eligibility thresholds.

7. The federal requirement is that all adult recipients must begin participating in work activities no later than 24 months after they start receiving TANF.

8. The size of the TANF grant depends on household size. A family cap policy means that the grant amount does not increase when a child is born to a mother who has been receiving assistance for 10 months or more.

The third administrative practice variable examines change in a state's SSI caseload. If states reduce TANF caseloads by moving recipients onto SSI, the authors expect to find that increases in the state SSI caseload will be associated with decreases in coverage.

Statistical Model

In the analyses below, hierarchical linear modeling is employed to explore the factors that influence both initial levels and trajectories of change in welfare coverage for children. When utilized to examine change over time, as opposed to contextual effects, hierarchical linear modeling is commonly referred to as linear growth modeling or the multilevel model for change (MMC; Singer and Willett 2003). The MMC approach is highly appropriate for this analysis. First, this approach is specifically designed to allow the detailed exploration of the causes of both within- and between-case variation in trajectories of change. This is consistent with this study's primary goal: to explain within- and across-state differences in changes in coverage levels. This approach is also valuable because it allows the examination of the determinants of overall trajectories of change over the period observed. This allows an assessment of what it is about the particular states that has resulted in large differences in overall trajectories of change in coverage since reform.

Within research on changes in welfare caseloads, fixed-effects modeling approaches are frequently used to examine the determinants of caseload levels from year to year. Such analyses provide insights into the manner in which within-state variation over time is associated with changes in caseloads, but such models do not make use of cross-sectional variation in factors across states. Consequently, the effects of factors that vary substantially between states but are somewhat stable over time (such as state racial composition) may not be fully captured by such analyses. The same problem is present in first-difference analyses, another approach used to analyze changes in caseloads. The MMC approach allows a direct examination of how a relatively stable factor, such as racial composition, affects overall trajectories of change in coverage over a period of time (in this case, the 14 years following reform). Year-to-year changes in racial composition are not theorized to have consequences for welfare adequacy. Rather, it is the stable differences in racial composition across states that are expected to matter. Finally, pooled cross-sectional analyses often raise serious problems in terms of high levels of autocorrelation and heteroscedasticity, both of which are present in these data. The error structure of the MMC model allows residuals to be autocorrelated and heteroscedastic within the larger Level-II units (states, in this analysis), which allows more efficient use of the data (Singer and Willett 2003).

One key assumption of the MMC is that unobserved panel-level effects

are not related with the variables in the analyses. A Hausman test indicated that one independent variable, the female employment-to-population ratio, violates this assumption. Once this variable is dropped from the analyses, Hausman tests indicate that this assumption is satisfied in the data set and the use of a MMC approach is appropriate. One approach would be to drop this variable from all analyses, but this raises the issue of omitting a potentially influential regressor. A more conservative approach is used in these analyses. One technique for addressing endogeneity in a multilevel context is the Mundlak approach (Mundlak 1978; Wooldridge 2001). In this technique, panel means for each Level-I variable are either included in the model as control variables or subtracted from each Level-I variable to control for endogeneity (Rabe-Hesketh and Skrondal 2008). The latter technique is used in the models below. Once the Level-I variables in these analyses are panel-mean (or cluster-mean) centered, Hausman tests indicate clearly that unobserved panel-level effects are not correlated with the independent variables in the analysis and consequently satisfy this assumption required for the use of the MMC.

In this case, the MMC is a two-level model in which states are the larger, Level-II units, and annual state coverage rates over time are the Level-I units. The Level-I model describes how states change over time; the Level-II model describes how these changes vary across states (Singer and Willett 2003). The following is the Level-I model for welfare coverage for children, Y, for each state s at time t:

$$Y_{ts} = \pi_{01} + \pi_{1s}\text{TIME}_{ts} + \pi_{2s}\text{TIME}^2_{ts} + \pi_{3s}\text{UNEMP}_{ts} + \pi_{4s}\text{UNEMP}_{ts} \times \text{TIME}_{ts} + \ldots \pi_{qs}X_{qts} + e_{ts}. \quad (1)$$

Annual state levels of coverage are a function of an intercept (π_{01}, the grand mean of coverage across states when all predictors equal zero), TIME (π_{1s} and π_{2s}), the state unemployment rate (UNEMP) at time t (π_{3s}), and the interaction of UNEMP and TIME (π_{4s}), while controlling for other variables included in the Level-I analysis (π_{qs}). The TIME variable in this analysis is centered so that the intercept parameter can be interpreted as the level of welfare coverage in 1995, the beginning of the period examined.

Using the first set of time-varying independent variables, the Level-I analysis attempts to explain within-state, year-to-year change in state coverage rates. The Level-II analysis, which utilizes a set of time-invariant independent variables, examines the manner in which stable state characteristics predict both the value of the intercept and the slope of an individual state's entire trajectory of change over the period examined. The outcome variables in the Level-II model are the π parameters from the Level-I model:

$$\pi_{01} = \beta_{00} + \beta_{01}\%\text{AFRICAN AMERICAN}_{1s} + \ldots + \beta_{0q}X_{qs} + r_{0s},$$
$$\pi_{1s} = \beta_{00} + \beta_{11}\%\text{AFRICAN AMERICAN}_{1s} + \ldots + \beta_{1q}X_{qs} + r_{0s}, \quad (2)$$
$$\pi_{2s} = \beta_{00} + r_{0s}.$$

For example, states with larger proportions of African American welfare recipients are hypothesized to have lower initial levels of coverage in 1995 and to experience more dramatic declines in welfare coverage over the 1995–2009 period. The Level-II model assesses factors that affect initial values (the intercept) and rates of decline or increase (the slope) in the dependent variable. For each state over the examined period, the trajectory of change in coverage is characterized in π_{1s}. This is regressed upon a measure of caseload racial composition (%African American) and a vector, X_{qs}, of other time-invariant predictors. The other time-invariant variables in the following analysis are per capita income, average government ideology, average earnings in low-wage occupations, and prereform coverage (discussed below). All other variables vary over time.

A few more model specification choices require explanation. The starting point for this analysis is 1995, because that year directly precedes the 1996 welfare reform and sets a prereform baseline against which change can be evaluated. A first step in MMC analyses is to specify the form of the time trend, linear or otherwise, in the dependent variable. A quadratic time specification (TIME and TIME^2) provides the best fit and is used in all models. Last, Alaska was identified as an extreme and unduly influential outlier using multiple techniques. The state is excluded from all models.

Tables 2, 3, and 4 present results from sets of models that address different questions about state experiences with declining coverage. Table 2 examines determinants of change over the entire 1995–2009 period, table 3 focuses on change between 1995 and 2000, and table 4 presents the results from models covering 2000–2009. The analyses are broken into these periods, as it is expected that the dynamics driving change in coverage in the years following reform, in the context of unusually strong economic growth, might be different than those of the 2000s. Further, the models examining the 2000–2009 period allow a distinct analysis of how states responded to the two most recent recessions.

At least three models are run for each time period. In each table, the first model contains the economic factors, political context, and other stable state characteristics that are expected to affect state welfare coverage. This model allows the identification of state characteristics that influence initial levels and change in coverage as well as a determination of what types of states have experienced the largest declines in coverage. The second model includes all measures from the first model and in-

Table 2

MMC Analysis of Welfare Coverage Rates for Children on State Characteristics: 1995–2009

	Model 1 *t*-ratio (Coef./SE)	Model 2 *t*-ratio (Coef./SE)	Model 3 *t*-ratio (Coef./SE)
Time in years (slope)	.85	−2.43*	−.36
Time^2 (deceleration)	8.09***	8.12***	2.00*
Year 2000	.40	.38	1.11
Level-I covariate main effects:			
Economic factors:			
Unemployment rate ($t - 1$)	3.27**	3.36**	1.71$^+$
Real per capita state revenue (2009 $)	−1.01	−.62	−.26
Female employment/population ($t - 1$)	−3.11**	−3.13**	−2.74**
Political context:			
Republican governor ($t - 1$)	−4.36***	−5.16***	−4.79***
Policy content:			
Policy severity index			−2.91**
Strength of sanctions			−5.27***
Administrative practice:			
Diversion payments			−6.39***
Real max. initial eligibility income			5.80***
Per capita SSI caseload			1.26
Level-II initial status (effect on intercept):			
Max. initial eligibility income in 1995[a]	.77	−.89	−1.90$^+$
Per capita income in 1995[a]	3.28**	−1.49	−1.07
Avg. gov. ideology 1995–2009[a]	4.06***	.33	−.98
% welfare caseload African American in 1995[a]	−.89	−.71	−2.00*
Avg. earnings in low-wage jobs (1995–2009)[a]	−.10	.27	.00
Level of coverage in 1994[a]		14.32***	13.69***
Level-II rate of change (effect on slope):			
Unemployment ($t - 1$) × time	−2.47*	−2.37*	−1.03
Per capita income in 1995[a] × time	−3.29**	−.15	−.47
Avg. government ideology (1995–2009)[a] × time	−.95	2.25*	1.69$^+$
% welfare caseload African American in 1995[a] × time	−2.16*	−3.75***	−2.44*
Avg. earnings in low-wage jobs (1995–2009)[a] × time	.92	.90	1.13
Level of coverage in 1994[a] × time		−6.24***	−5.76***
Constant	−4.21***	.82	−.43
Random-effects parameters:			
Intercept	4.65***	3.86***	3.88**
Time	4.20***	3.77***	3.75***
Residual	17.83***	17.73***	17.81***
Covariance (time, intercept)	−3.50***	−1.43	−.72$^+$
No. of observations	735	735	735
Deviance (−2 log likelihood)	−1,844.7	−2,071.5	−2,058.1
BIC	−1,706.1	−1,926.27	−1,873.2
Pseudo-R^2	.67	.83	.84

Note.—MMC = multilevel model for change; AFDC = Aid to Families with Dependent Children program; TANF = Temporary Assistance for Needy Families program; coef. = coefficient; SE = standard error; req. = requirement; avg. = average; gov. = government; max. = maximum; BIC = Bayesian information criterion.

[a] Variable is time invariant.

$^+$ $p < .10$.

* $p < .05$.

** $p < .01$.

*** $p < .001$.

Table 3

MMC Analysis of Welfare Coverage Rates for Children on State Characteristics: 1995–2000

	Model 4 *t*-ratio (Coef./SE)	Model 5 *t*-ratio (Coef./SE)	Model 6 *t*-ratio (Coef./SE)	Model 7 *t*-ratio (Coef./SE)
Time in years (slope)	−1.04	−1.94+	−3.19**	−1.64
Time^2 (deceleration)	5.16***	5.27***	5.27***	4.30***
Level-I covariate main effects:				
Economic factors:				
Unemployment rate ($t - 1$)	−.35	1.03	1.01	1.02
Real per capita state revenue (2009 $)	−1.05	−1.46	−.61	−.73
Female employment/population ($t - 1$)	1.00	.42	.42	.40
Political context:				
Republican governor ($t - 1$)	.14	−1.46	−1.37	−1.43
Policy content:				
Policy severity index				1.20
Strength of sanctions				−.52
Administrative practice:				
Diversion payments				−3.14**
Real max initial eligibility income				1.72+
SSI caseload				1.85+
Level-II initial status (effect on intercept):				
Max. initial eligibility income in 1995[a]	1.87+	−.47	−.48	−1.43
Per capita income in 1995[a]	4.26***	−.47		.17
Avg. government ideology 1995–2000[a]	2.80**	−.98	−.88	−.36
% welfare caseload African American in 1995[a]	−.35	.61	.57	−.65
Avg. earnings in low-wage jobs (1995–2000)[a]	−.28	−.19	−.65	−.86

Level of coverage in 1994[a]		21.98***	25.94***	21.78***
Level-II rate of change (effect on slope):				
Per capita income in 1995[a] × time	−2.94**	−1.36		−1.61
Avg. government ideology (1995–2009)[a] × time	1.99*	2.66**	2.93**	2.52*
% welfare caseload African American in 1995[a] × time	−2.14*	−2.41*	−2.48*	−2.11*
Avg. earnings in low-wage jobs (1995–2000)[a] × time	.96	1.10	.21	1.39
Level of coverage in 1994[a] × time		−1.90+	−3.28**	−2.21*
Constant	−4.22***	.15	−.12	−.18
Random-effects parameters:				
Intercept	4.37***	.80	.82	1.09
Time	3.26***	3.48***	3.58***	3.22**
Residual	9.82***	11.04***	11.04***	11.03***
Covariance (time, intercept)	−.81	1.73	1.78	2.44*
No. of observations	294	294	294	294
Deviance (−2 log likelihood)	−729.96	−862.54	−859.96	−879.23
BIC	−616.28	−737.50	−746.29	−725.77
Pseudo-R^2	.63	.87	.87	.87

NOTE.—MMC = multilevel model for change; AFDC = Aid to Families with Dependent Children program; TANF = Temporary Assistance for Needy Families program; Coef. = coefficient; SE = standard error; req. = requirement; avg. = average; Max. = maximum; BIC = Bayesian information criterion.

[a] Variable is time invariant.

+ $p < .10$.

* $p < .05$.

** $p < .01$.

*** $p < .001$.

Table 4

MMC Analysis of Welfare Coverage Rates for Children on State Characteristics: 2000–2009

	Model 8 *t*-ratio (Coef./SE)	Model 9 *t*-ratio (Coef./SE)	Model 10 *t*-ratio (Coef./SE)
Time in years (slope)	.74	−3.08**	−3.13**
Time^2 (deceleration)	1.82$^+$	1.82$^+$	2.06*
Level-I covariate main effects:			
Economic factors:			
Unemployment rate ($t - 1$)	2.70**	2.67**	2.61**
Real per capita state revenue (2009$)	.49	.42	.90
Female employment/population ($t - 1$)	−1.64	−1.69$^+$	−1.87$^+$
Political context:			
Republican governor ($t - 1$)	−2.00*	−1.95$^+$	−1.93$^+$
Policy content:			
Policy severity index			−2.40*
Strength of sanctions			−3.57***
Administrative practice:			
Diversion payments			−7.22***
Real max. initial eligibility income			.82
SSI caseload			.56
Level-II initial status (effect on intercept):			
Max. initial eligibility income in 2000[a]	2.75**	1.61	1.55
Per capita income in 2000[a]	1.27	−.55	−.43
Avg. government ideology 2000–2009[a]	3.26**	−1.06	−1.07
% welfare caseload African American in 2000[a]	−1.43	−1.55	−1.75$^+$
Avg. earnings in low-wage jobs (2000–2009)[a]	.48	−1.04	−1.00
Level of coverage in 1999[a]		13.41***	13.69***
Level-II rate of change (effect on slope):			
Per capita income in 2000[a] × time	−1.22	.05	−.33
Avg. government ideology (2000–2009)[a] × time	−1.62	2.37*	2.53*
% welfare caseload African American in 2000[a] × time	.17	−1.17	−.90
Avg. earnings in low-wage jobs (2000–2009)[a] × time	.44	1.93$^+$	2.24*
Level of coverage in 1999[a] × time		−8.40***	−8.46***
Constant	−2.63**	2.23*	2.34*
Random effects:			
Intercept	4.55***	4.44***	4.42**
Time	4.26***	4.24***	3.98***
Residual	14.01***	14.00***	13.96***
Covariance (time, intercept)	−4.23***	−2.86**	−2.54**
No. of observations	490	490	490
Deviance (−2 log likelihood)	−1,591.66	−1,674.36	−1,743.01
BIC	−1,467.78	−1,538.08	−1,575.76
Pseudo-R^2	.58	.81	.82

Note.—MMC = multilevel model for change; TANF = Temporary Assistance for Needy Families program; SSP = Separate State Program; Coef. = coefficient; SE = standard error; req. = requirement; avg. = average; Max. = maximum; BIC = Bayesian information criterion.

[a] Variable is time invariant.

$^+$ $p < .10$.

* $p < .05$.

** $p < .01$.

*** $p < .001$.

troduces a variable capturing states' initial levels of coverage (in either 1994 or 1999). The importance of this variable will be discussed in further detail below. The last model in each table includes the variables from preceding models and introduces the measures characterizing policy content and administrative practice. This model attempts to identify more specifically the components of state-level TANF policies and administrative practices that have contributed to reductions in coverage. The authors recognize the possibility that measures of policy content may function as intermediate variables that link state characteristics with outcomes. For example, more racially diverse states have introduced TANF legislation with stricter sanctions, which may correspondingly reduce coverage. Introducing the variables in this order allows an assessment of the extent to which the influence of particular factors are independent of program structure, channeled through policy choices, or both.

Results

State Characteristics

The structure of MMC analyses allows the examination of the influence of independent variables on three different aspects of the dependent variable. The "Level-I covariate main effects" portion of table 2 contains the estimates for Level-I variables that change over time. These coefficients characterize the relationship of annual levels of the independent variables to annual change in coverage from year to year. It should be noted that since these variables are panel mean-centered, these estimates are based only on within-state variation over time. The Level-II section of the table presents estimates of the relationships of Level-II time-invariant variables with initial levels of coverage in 1995 (the intercept) and with the trajectory of overall change in coverage for the entire 1995–2009 period (the slope).

Change in Coverage since Reform: 1995–2009

Economic factors.—Beginning with the economic factors, estimates for the unemployment rate suggest that coverage is strongly associated with a state's economic climate. All three of the models in table 2 include state unemployment ($t - 1$) as well as the interaction between the lagged unemployment rate and time. The interaction is included in order to ascertain whether the influence of the unemployment rate on coverage changes over time. The state unemployment rate exhibits a strong, positive, and statistically significant association with coverage, indicating that higher unemployment is associated with increasing coverage (or smaller declines in coverage) from one year to the next. However, the interaction term is negative, indicating that the unemployment rate's positive association with coverage decreases over time and actually re-

verses sign by 2007. This suggests that high unemployment in the late 1990s and early 2000s produced increases in caseloads that outpaced the increases in poverty, consequently raising the coverage ratio. However, by the mid-to-late 2000s, higher levels of unemployment have no relationship with coverage or may even be associated with reductions in coverage. The latter outcome is presumably a consequence of unemployment increasing the size of the population in poverty faster than states increase their caseloads. In line with arguments elsewhere, this suggests that TANF is no longer as responsive to fluctuations in economic conditions as has been the case in the past (Murray and Primus 2005).

The results in table 1 also reveal that the female employment-to-population ratio is related to change in coverage; increases in the ratio are associated with decreases in coverage. Increased female labor force participation could increase, decrease, or have no effect on coverage. Growth in the number of women in the labor market could reduce the number of households in poverty and, assuming caseloads remain constant, increase coverage. However, if women's entry into the workforce removes them from both the TANF rolls and poverty, then there should be no change in coverage. Last, if entry into the labor market removes women from receipt of benefits but does not pull their families out of poverty, then coverage should decrease. These results suggest that this last process appears to have been the most common, as a higher female employment-to-population ratio within states is associated with decreasing coverage. Increases in earnings inequality, working poverty, and part-time and contingent work arrangements observed in recent decades are all consistent with such a relationship, especially given that working women have been disproportionately affected by many of these phenomena.

The estimates for real per-capita state revenue ($t - 1$) may seem counterintuitive. In all three models, its association with coverage is consistently negative and not statistically significant. This variable is likely capturing a negative relationship between revenue and coverage produced by the countercyclical nature of welfare provision within states over time. When economic growth is strong, revenue and employment rise and coverage decreases. In an economic slowdown, revenues decline, employment falls, and some states respond to increased need in a manner that raises coverage rates. Regardless, the lack of statistical significance for these estimates indicates, interestingly, that state revenues do not drive short-term fluctuations in coverage.

Political context, state wealth, and race.—Model 1 in table 2 suggests a contributing role for state-level political conditions. The estimates suggest that coverage falls more year to year in states with a Republican governor in the previous year. This is consistent with Blank's (2001) finding that caseloads declined more dramatically in states with Repub-

lican governors. Model 1 also includes Level-II time-invariant variables that affect both the intercept and the slope of the overall decline in coverage over the entire 1995–2009 period. The goal here is to understand how relatively stable state characteristics, such as state wealth, government ideology, racial composition, and wage levels affect the overall rate of decline in coverage. Estimates for the intercept suggest, as expected, that initial (1995) levels of coverage are statistically significantly higher in states with higher per capita incomes in 1995 and in states with more ideologically liberal governments over the period examined.

The second set of Level-II results, located under "Level-II rate of change (effect on slope)," characterize the influence of time-invariant factors on overall trajectories of change in coverage. Consistent with expectations, there is a negative and statistically significant association between the percentage of African American welfare recipients and overall change in coverage between 1995 and 2009. However, counterintuitively per capita state income and average government ideology also exhibit negative relationships, indicating that each is associated with steeper overall declines in coverage. The estimated relationship for per capita state income is highly statistically significant. While not statistically significant, average government ideology bears a curious negative sign, indicating larger declines in coverage in more ideologically liberal states.

These unexpected results stem from strong relationships among prereform levels of coverage, state wealth, and government ideology. In particular, per capita income in 1995 is highly correlated with the level of coverage in 1995 ($r = .75$) and consequently acts as a proxy for initial levels of coverage. Figure 4 indicates that prereform levels of coverage are strongly associated with the degree of subsequent change in coverage; states with the highest initial levels of coverage experience the largest decreases in coverage over the entire period. To reiterate, coverage does not fall faster in these states because they are wealthier or because they have more liberal governments; rather, these wealthier and more liberal states had the highest prereform levels of coverage and consequently the farthest to fall in the context of a national mandate to reduce caseloads. To confirm this interpretation, model 2 explicitly models this influence by including level of coverage in 1994. The association between prereform coverage levels and change in overall coverage is both very strong and highly statistically significant; states with higher prereform levels of coverage are estimated to experience substantially steeper overall declines in coverage between 1995 and 2009. Further, a state's prereform level of coverage is one of the strongest predictors of the magnitude of subsequent overall change in coverage.

With the inclusion of prereform levels of coverage in model 2, the association between per-capita income and change in overall coverage is no longer statistically significant. Additionally, the estimated relation-

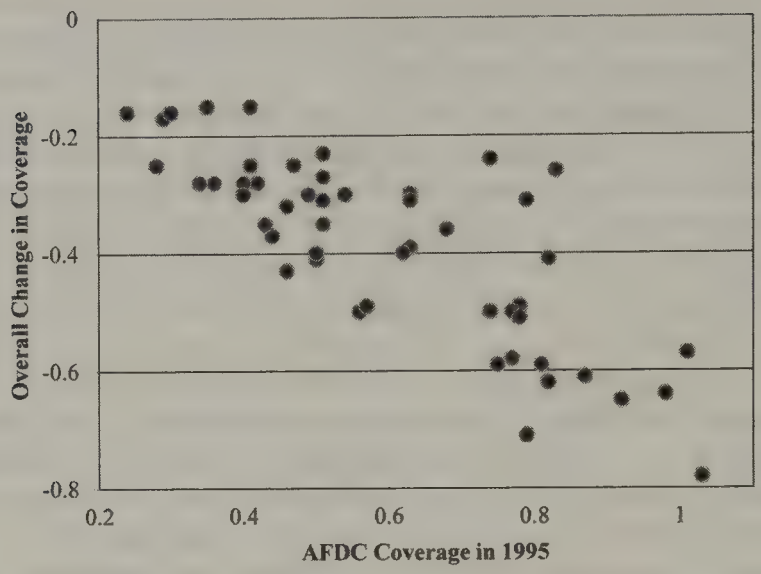


FIG. 4.—Change in coverage 1995–2009 by prereform coverage level in 1995. AFDC = Aid to Families with Dependent Children program.

ship between average government ideology and trajectory of change in coverage both reverses sign and achieves statistical significance. Model 2 suggests that coverage declined less in states that had more liberal governments (on average) between 1995 and 2009. The manner in which the inclusion of prereform coverage substantially alters these relationships deserves some elaboration. The 1996 reform legislation both required and incentivized states to reduce caseloads. States responded to these pressures differently depending on the size of their respective caseloads. Ideally, the inclusion of the prereform coverage variable captures variation across states in caseload reductions that are the result of somewhat mechanical responses to welfare reform. Once this variation is accounted for, the influence of state-level factors begins to emerge. Stated more succinctly, welfare reform initiated a broad national trend of declining caseloads and coverage; controlling for this trend allows a clearer delineation of the manner in which particular state characteristics either moderated or accelerated this trend.

Another consequence of controlling for prereform coverage is an increase in the strength and statistical significance of the negative association between the proportion of a state's welfare recipients that are African American and overall change in coverage. This is a consequence of the fact that a substantial number of states with large percentages of African American recipients had comparatively smaller reductions in coverage as a result of already having low initial levels of coverage in 1995. Once these differences in prereform coverage levels are controlled

for (differences that are a legacy of racial attitudes in state practices), the association strengthens between the racial composition of welfare recipients and changes in coverage. The authors assume that this relationship is in part a consequence of the stricter sanctions imposed in states with larger African American populations. This interpretation is supported by the results in model 3, in which the inclusion of a variable measuring strength of sanctions reduces the size of the coefficient of welfare recipient racial composition. Given the strong historical relationship between race and the generosity of state welfare benefits (Moller 2002; Thiebaud 2007), the highly racialized nature of public opinion and political rhetoric surrounding the issue of welfare (Gilens 1999; Hancock 2004), and the specific findings that indicate the implementation of stricter sanctions and tougher eligibility requirements in more racially diverse states (Soss et al. 2011), it is not surprising that race is found to play a role in accelerating reductions in the utilization of, or access to, welfare services.[9]

The manner in which the inclusion of prereform level of coverage influences other relationships in the analysis has been discussed, but why does this factor matter so much in and of itself? First, there is the simple fact that states with higher initial levels had further to fall as all states have responded to strong incentives to reduce caseloads. Additionally, states with generous prereform programs (i.e., states with high coverage and inclusive eligibility thresholds) likely had a larger proportion of caseloads comprised of poor or near poor families with fewer barriers to labor market participation. Such families may have been, in a sense, easier to remove from the rolls. Also, in the context of heightened attention to caseload levels, policy makers and administrators in states with above-average caseloads may have experienced more pressure to reduce caseloads. The 1996 welfare law requires state welfare officials to submit annual reports on caseload reduction. Attention to such reports in the media and from political elites, particularly in the early years following reform, undoubtedly increased the salience of caseload reduction for local welfare officials. Such attention may have both fueled coverage declines and impeded subsequent expansions of coverage even in the context of increased need for services.

TANF policy content and administrative practice.—Model 3, which includes time-varying measures of the content of state-level TANF policies and changes in administrative practice, seeks to determine whether these changes contributed to declines in coverage and, if so, how. Consistent with previous research on caseloads, the strength of state TANF sanctions and the stringency of state welfare policies are both strongly

9. Additional analyses (not shown) examine the effect of the percentage of the state population that identifies as Hispanic and the percentage that is foreign born. Neither variable is statistically significant.

and statistically significantly associated with declines in coverage year to year. Within states over time, coverage declines more substantially in states with stronger sanctions and TANF policies that are stricter than federal requirements.

Model 3 also examines the effects of the presence of formal state diversion programs, the possible movement of recipients from TANF to the SSI caseload, and changes in eligibility thresholds. States with formal diversion programs experienced substantially steeper declines in coverage year to year than was the case in states lacking such programs. This estimated relationship is both substantial and highly statistically significant, and given the myriad formal and informal diversion strategies employed at welfare offices, this variable may capture only a fraction of the overall contribution of diversion practices to declines in coverage.

Estimates from model 3 identify no statistically significant association between state SSI caseloads and change in coverage. Last, the results in table 2 suggest that the maximum income threshold for initial eligibility is strongly and statistically significantly related to change in coverage. Within states, higher income-eligibility thresholds are associated with slower declines in coverage year to year. On average, the real value of income-eligibility thresholds fell by roughly 12 percent between 1995 and 2009. However, this average conceals enormous variation across states. While 14 states have increased the real value of their eligibility thresholds over this period, a number of states have dramatically reduced the nominal value of their thresholds in addition to the declines in real values due to inflation. These reductions constituted a 40 percent decrease in the real value of thresholds in 13 states; in 8 of those states, the value of thresholds dropped by over 50 percent. In Arkansas, for example, the maximum eligibility income for a family of three fell between 1995 and 2009 from roughly $600 to $279 per month in constant (2009) dollars. In contrast, the threshold exceeds $1,200 in several states (Alaska, Hawaii, Nevada, North Dakota, Rhode Island, Tennessee, and Virginia). These analyses suggest shifting income-eligibility thresholds are an important and heretofore underdiscussed practice through which states have reduced coverage.

Change in Coverage during Strong and Weak Economic Performance: 1995–2000 and 2000–2009

The following analyses investigate whether the factors driving changes in coverage during the years immediately following reform, a period characterized by unusually low unemployment, may be different than those driving developments in the 2000s. Table 3 presents results from analyses of annual and overall changes in welfare coverage for children between 1995 and 2000, and table 4 provides the same for 2000–2009.

As these models are based on substantially different numbers of state-year observations (294 in table 3 and 490 in table 4, respectively), differences observed between the sets of models are only suggestive of distinct dynamics between the two periods. For example, substantially fewer factors emerge as statistically significant in the analysis of the 1995–2000 period. Unfortunately, it is not possible to determine the extent to which this is a function of differences in the number of observations or actual differences between the two time periods. Regardless, the distinct dynamics that emerge are illuminating, even if they must be qualified.

Economic factors.—While the lagged state unemployment rate is statistically significant in the models examining the full period (table 2) and in those covering only the 2000s (table 4), this factor is not statistically significant and has a substantially smaller coefficient in the models that focus on 1995–2000 (table 3). In the 1995–2000 period, the level of unemployment in a state in one year is not related to the degree of change in coverage from that year to the next. This suggests that declines in state AFDC and TANF coverage in the years following reform are primarily driven by changes in policies and administrative practices, not by local economic conditions. This is worth emphasizing because it underlines an important difference between this study's coverage analyses and the broader caseload literature. Nearly all research on caseloads finds that low unemployment rates were a contributing factor, and often a major contributing factor, to caseload declines in the late 1990s. The authors do not dispute this; low unemployment clearly contributed to caseload declines. However, these results suggest that the strong relationship between low unemployment and caseload reductions did not translate into substantial improvements in state coverage levels. If anything, the direction of the relationship in models 5–7 suggests low unemployment is associated with falling coverage year to year.[10] This indicates that, in states with improved employment prospects, families were moving off of the TANF rolls faster than they were moving out of poverty. This point is critical to evaluations of the success of welfare reform.

This finding appears to be inconsistent with the results from the models in table 2, which indicate that unemployment has a positive but eroding association with coverage between 1995 and 2009. The authors suspect that states' responses to both the 2001 and 2007–9 recessions drive this association. Further, regarding the interaction term that suggests the influence of the unemployment rate declines over time, the authors suspect that this variable largely captures differences in state responsiveness between these two recessions. Simply put, states re-

10. As this variable is panel mean-centered, all values of unemployment below a state's mean unemployment rate take on a negative value. In the context of below-average unemployment, the sign of the association between unemployment and change in coverage consequently flips.

sponded more to increases in unemployment and poverty during the 2001 recession than during the 2007–9 recession.

A similar pattern emerges in the estimates of the influence of the female employment-to-population ratio. Although this factor is not a statistically significant predictor of coverage in the 1995–2000 period (table 3), and is only significant at the level of a one-tailed test in the 2000–2009 (models 9 and 10 in table 4) period, the results for the full study period (table 2) indicate that the female employment-to-population ratio has a strong, negative, and statistically significant association with change in coverage. It was already noted that this indicates that the movement of more women into the labor force is associated with larger reductions in child caseloads than reductions in child poverty. Further, it is interesting to highlight that the coefficient for this variable is positive in the late 1990s (table 3) and negative in the 2000s (table 4). This change of sign suggests that higher levels of female labor force participation may have been associated with increases in coverage during the late 1900s, presumably as the movement of women into the workforce reduced poverty faster than caseloads. Such a finding is entirely consistent with the claims of proponents of welfare reform. However, in the 2000s, higher rates of labor market participation by women are associated with falling coverage. This suggests that increased labor force participation in these years was associated with women and their children moving off the welfare rolls faster than families were moving out of poverty. While these results are only suggestive, this narrative is highly plausible and consistent with a large body of research. Women leaving the welfare rolls in the late 1990s, whether they did so voluntarily or involuntarily, entered a tight labor market and likely had fewer barriers to labor-market participation than did the women who remained on the rolls in the 2000s. As these women (and in most cases their children) stopped receiving assistance, they entered a labor market characterized by historically weak job growth.

Initial coverage, political context, state wealth, wages, and race.—Turning to the time-invariant factors across states, a number of instructive contrasts emerge from the comparison between the two time periods. As was the case in the full-period analyses, coverage decreased more substantially in states with higher initial levels of coverage. While the magnitude of this influence in the late 1990s is subtle, the effect in the 2000s is enormous. This increase in the influence of initial levels of coverage is likely a consequence of the manner in which the Deficit Reduction Act of 2005 ratcheted up the requirements for further caseload reduction. Second, the coverage-reducing influence of Republican governors is significant in the 2000s but not in the 1995–2000 analyses. While it is not possible to discern here which of the various budgetary or policy mechanisms that may link the party of the governor to changes in coverage matter most, these analyses strongly suggest that this political

factor has become more important over time. Further, this is consistent with the finding by Soss and associates (2011) that state political factors were unrelated to state TANF policy choices in the mid-1990s.

Conversely, states with larger proportions of African American welfare recipients experienced more substantial declines in coverage in the late 1990s, but welfare caseload racial composition is not statistically significant in the 2000s. One possible explanation for this lack of significance in the 2000s is a floor effect. In 1995, states with larger African American populations had substantially lower initial levels of coverage and then experienced markedly larger decreases in coverage between 1995 and 2000. It is possible that, by the 2000s, coverage had fallen so much for these states, on average, that the potential for distinctive further reductions was largely exhausted.

Finally, while not statistically significant in either the full-period model or the 1990s analyses, in the 2000s analyses (table 4), the variable characterizing average wages in low-wage jobs is statistically significant. The estimated relationship is positive, indicating that states with higher earnings levels in low-wage jobs have experienced milder reductions in coverage over the 2000s. This is consistent with the principle of less eligibility as, conversely, states with lower earnings in low-wage jobs have then experienced larger declines in coverage.

In sum, coverage fell more substantially during the mid- to late 1990s in the states with higher levels of prereform coverage, more conservative state legislatures, and larger proportions of African American welfare recipients. The effects of state government ideology and initial levels of coverage continue into the 2000s; states with more conservative governments and those with higher levels of coverage in 1999 experienced larger declines through the 2000s. The racial composition of welfare caseloads does not appear to influence change over the 2000s. A number of other factors emerge as particularly influential in the 2000–2009 period: coverage fell less in states with higher unemployment rates and in states with higher earnings in low-wage occupations. Finally, coverage fell more in states with Republican governors.

Policy content and administrative practice.—In terms of policy content, results suggest that neither the severity of TANF policies (work requirements, time limits, and family caps) nor the strength of sanctions is associated with year-to-year changes in coverage during the late 1990s (table 3). This finding draws another contrast to the caseload literature, in which these specific policies and the strength of sanctions are found to be statistically significantly related to reductions in caseloads during the late 1990s. The current findings suggest that the strictness of these policies may be associated with caseload reductions during the years immediately following reform but not with reductions in welfare coverage. In other words, in many of the states where caseloads were falling, in part as a consequence of these policies and sanctions, poverty was

falling as well. Consequently, there is no statistically significant relationship between these polices and changes in welfare coverage during these years.

In estimates for the 2000–2009 period (table 4), however, both of the policy content variables exhibit substantial and statistically significant associations with year-to-year reductions in coverage. This is particularly understandable in the case of the policy severity index, as one component of this index captures whether time limits are shorter than federal requirements. The cumulative effect of time limits would be expected to manifest slowly and increase over time.

Among the administrative practice variables, the presence of a formal diversion program is estimated to be statistically significantly associated with falling coverage in both the 1995–2000 period (table 3) and the 2000–2009 period (table 4); the magnitude of the negative association is considerably larger in the latter period. This suggests that, among the measured administrative practices, diversion is a central and increasingly important driver of declining coverage. States with higher income thresholds for initial eligibility experienced slower year-to-year declines in coverage during the full 1995–2009 period (table 2). This factor diminishes in size and is no longer statistically significant in the 2000–2009 period (table 4). The authors suspect that the diminishing importance of this factor can be attributed to the rising influence of other factors, especially time limits and diversion practices. The nature of those other factors may render initial eligibility thresholds less decisive.

Discussion

Overall, the findings of this study speak to a variety of specific questions regarding the consequences of welfare reform and broader issues of the dynamics shaping welfare provision. At the broadest descriptive level, it bears repeating that reform has dramatically transformed access to welfare benefits. Far fewer poor families have access to cash assistance under TANF than under AFDC, as evidenced by the dramatic decline in child cases since reform. Simultaneously, national child-poverty rates have increased steadily since 2000, from 16.1 percent to 22 percent in 2010 (Dalaker 2001; DeNavas-Walt, Proctor, and Smith 2011). If one conceptualizes welfare coverage for children broadly as a rough indicator of the inclusiveness, accessibility, or adequacy of state welfare benefits, then one of the major consequences of welfare reform is the disconnection of the generally robust, countercyclical relationship of economic conditions with welfare provision.

The observed erosion of the association between unemployment and coverage is likely the consequence, in part, of two major changes following welfare reform: the block grant structure of TANF and the di-

versification of TANF program expenditures away from cash grants into a variety of work support programs. Federal expenditures under TANF take the form of a fixed block grant in which an individual state's grant is based upon the amount it received in the mid-1990s (Weaver 2002; USDHHS 2008). These funds are not adjusted for inflation, and the real value of the federal block grant has eroded by roughly 30 percent since 1996 (Finch and Schott 2011). Further, the block grant does not increase or decrease in response to business cycle fluctuations, although states may draw upon unspent funds from previous years or borrow money from the federal government. Following the 2001 recession, states reported cuts in various programs funded under the TANF block grant as they exhausted unspent funds and experienced increased demand for benefits (Neuberger 2002). During the 2007–9 recession, states did receive additional funding in 2009 and 2010 via the TANF Emergency Contingency Fund (created by the 2009 Recovery Act; 123 Stat. 115), but these additional funds ended in September of 2010 (Finch and Schott 2011). Additionally, until 2006, the percentage that each year's caseload was below 1995 levels could be applied as a credit against required work participation rates, providing a strong incentive to reduce caseloads as much as possible. The Deficit Reduction Act of 2005 recalibrated the formula for this credit to reward caseload reductions below 2005 caseload levels, incentivizing states to reduce caseloads beyond what were already historic lows. Transformation of the funding structure, program diversification, and incentives to reduce caseloads are some of welfare reform's major top-down features that have reduced both states' capacity and incentives to respond to increases in need (US House of Representatives 2010; Finch and Schott 2011; Soss et al. 2011).

In addition, this study finds that higher levels of labor force participation by women are associated with falling coverage rates. This finding underlines both a major consequence of reform and the utility of the coverage measure. Proponents of welfare reform may point to a strong relationship between female labor force participation and declining caseloads as evidence of reform achieving stated goals: poor women are moving into jobs, off of the welfare rolls, and presumably (in many proreform narratives) out of poverty. The strong relationship between female labor force participation and declining coverage supports a very different narrative. This relationship indicates that, as more women enter the labor market, their families are moving off of the welfare rolls but not necessarily out of poverty.

TANF during the Great Recession

The 2007–9 recession provided a rather extreme test of the responsiveness of TANF during an economic downturn. Although state coverage rates declined only slightly between 2007 and 2009 (see fig. 1), poverty

increased significantly over this period. State caseloads did increase enough to maintain the relatively low levels of coverage observed in 2007.[11] However, such national aggregation conceals enormous variation in individual state responses to the recession. Figure 5, which presents changes in child caseloads and coverage between 2007 and 2009, suggests that coverage fell in roughly half of all states, remained stable in around a quarter, and increased in one-quarter.

In a 2010 congressional hearing, Elizabeth Lower-Basch of the Center for Law and Social Policy provided her organization's understanding of why TANF caseloads did not increase more during the 2007–9 recession (US House of Representatives 2010). In addition to the broad funding and program changes that characterize TANF mentioned above, Lower-Basch emphasizes the role played by permanent sanctions, lifetime limits, and use of formal and informal diversion practices at the level of welfare offices. In addition, noting staff reductions in recent years and the constraints imposed by state budget deficits, she posits that TANF caseloads did not increase during the recession because agencies were simply overwhelmed with applications and the resulting delays may have driven many applicants to give up on their efforts to receive assistance (US House of Representatives 2010). Finally, one cannot know the extent to which the observed caseload trends can be attributed to the decision by eligible applicants to forego assistance as a consequence of either believing they are not eligible or the stigma associated with welfare receipt.

Declining Coverage in the TANF Era

In general this study's findings are consistent with research that characterizes welfare reform as a fundamental restructuring, which has dramatically reduced the capacity of this particular program to reach its target population: poor women with children. In addition, this study provides insights into more pragmatic questions of how states have reduced their coverage levels, as well as an identification of the characteristics of states that have more substantially reduced welfare coverage.

First, what are the multiple practices through which policy makers, caseworkers, and administrators dramatically reduced their rolls? The results suggest that declines in coverage are strongly associated with the strength of sanctions (including loss of all benefits) in a state and more severe TANF policies (shorter time limits, stricter work participation policies, or family caps). Additionally, the presence of formal diversion payment programs, which have been adopted in 33 states by 2009, is associated with steeper declines in coverage. These analyses also un-

11. While cases did increase, research examining the performance of welfare programs during the 2007–9 recession indicates that the total value of TANF benefits received by poor, single mothers actually fell slightly between 2007 and 2009 (Bentele 2012).

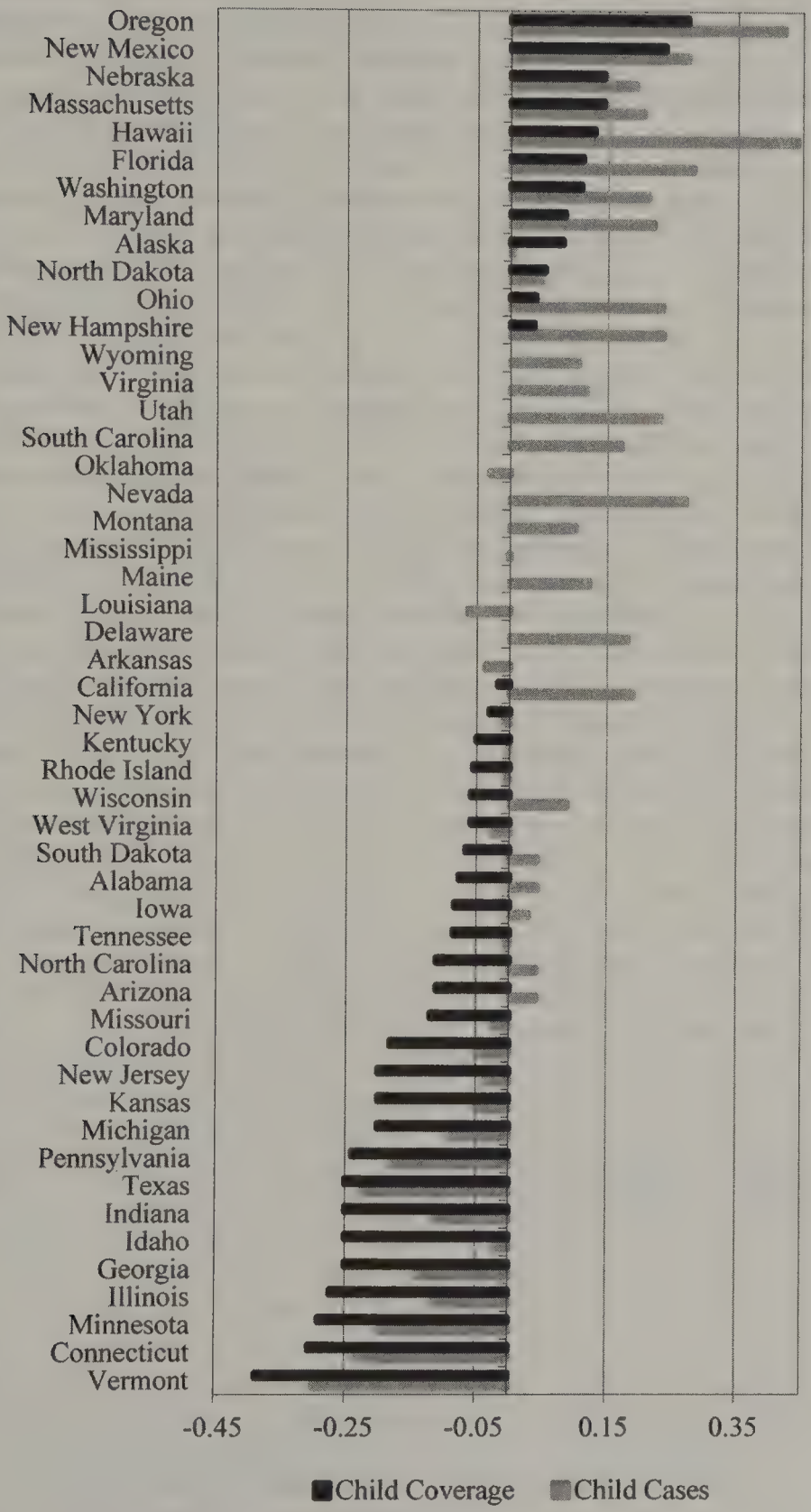


FIG. 5.—Percentage of change in caseloads and coverage between 2007 and 2009

derscore the importance of another, less frequently discussed development that has reduced access to TANF benefits: the reduction or erosion of income-eligibility thresholds. Coverage fell less in states that have increased their income-eligibility thresholds since reform.

In addition to these practices, some studies suggest that states have a strong incentive to reduce TANF caseloads by shifting recipients onto other programs. Although this study finds no evidence that coverage is associated with state SSI caseloads, the results do indicate that some states made greater use of SSPs and subsequently SSFs than others, providing benefits outside of the constraints of federal TANF requirements. The results further suggest that states with higher prereform coverage are much more likely to enroll recipients in SSPs. However, it should be cautioned that nationally the increase in coverage attributable to the use of SSPs, 3 percent at best, is quite small. Similarly, the estimated increase in the national average of state coverage rates attributable to SSF programs is less than 3 percent in 2009.

Finally, a central contribution of this study is the identification of the characteristics of states that have reduced coverage more substantially than others. This allows an assessment of the extent to which the dynamics of welfare access in the TANF era are consistent with expectations derived from a wide body of welfare state theory. Soss and associates (2011), in their wide-ranging examination of the dynamics of welfare provision since the 1960s, argue that the availability and generosity of welfare benefits have been shaped consistently by three forces: the racial composition of target populations, state political context, and prevailing wage levels in the low-wage sector of local labor markets. However, they note that in their analyses of the determinants of TANF policy choices (policies determining the strength of sanctions and benefit eligibility), the only factor that was consistently predictive of outcomes was race, specifically the proportion of African American welfare recipients. Soss and associates (2011) suggest that in the context of broad political momentum and widespread bipartisan assertions of the necessity of welfare reform, the influence of state-level political and labor market factors may have receded. Indeed, with the exception of the coverage-reducing influence of Republican governors, the initial results presented in model 1 would be largely consistent with these findings.

However, after controlling for state differences in prereform levels of coverage, subsequent models suggest that, in addition to the influence of the racial composition of state welfare caseloads, coverage fell more in states with conservative governments and states with lower average earnings in low-wage occupations in the 2000s. Welfare reform initiated a broad national trend of coverage reduction; controlling for this trend allows an examination of the ways in which states have either accelerated or moderated the access-reducing implications of welfare reform. This study suggests that the racial composition of welfare caseloads and state

political conditions are central to shaping the manner in which states have negotiated pressure to reduce caseloads. The manner in which states have actually implemented TANF policies over many years may be only loosely connected to the character of policy choices made in the initial years of reform, as evidenced by state utilization of SSPs and SSF programs. In addition, these analyses suggest that earnings levels in low-wage occupations may have reemerged as a factor shaping access to benefits. This last finding is both intriguing and consistent with Soss and associates' (2011) emphasis on the manners in which welfare practices and offices have become increasingly integrated with local labor markets.

The methodological lens utilized in this study reveals that trends in access to cash assistance in the TANF era are entirely consistent with the broad forces that have shaped both the generosity and accessibility of welfare benefits historically. Further, the cumulative influence of these factors, combined with the pressures initiated and flexibility afforded by welfare reform, has produced the current dramatic variation in the accessibility of benefits across states. This variation was exacerbated by the intensity of the 2007–9 recession; by 2009, the child coverage ratio ranged from .03 in Idaho to .57 in California. This is rather incredible given AFDC's entitlement status and illustrates the manner in which state policy choices have produced dramatic differences in the accessibility of financial support available to poor women and their children through this component of the contemporary American safety net.

Note

Keith Gunnar Bentele is with the Sociology Department at the University of Massachusetts Boston. His current research includes assessments of the performance of safety net programs in the context of the 2007–9 recession and consequences of this recession for state poverty rates and racial inequality. **Lisa Thiebaud Nicoli** is a PhD candidate in sociology at the University of Arizona. Her dissertation examines how states set benefit levels in programs that provide cash assistance to single mothers.

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Judge or Bureaucrat? How Administrative Law Judges Exercise Discretion in Welfare Bureaucracies

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Administrative law judges are neglected but powerful actors in public welfare bureaucracies, presiding over quasi-judicial hearings triggered if participants challenge a bureaucratic decision on public welfare benefits. Drawing on ethnographic observations of fair hearings, as well as interviews with administrative law judges and appellants, this study seeks to understand the ways in which these judges exercise discretion and how it affects the adjudication of disputes. Findings suggest that disputes generated by poorly run bureaucracies provide judges with limited opportunity to use professional skills or discretion to scrutinize bureaucratic practices. When opportunities for such judgments do arise, judges take widely divergent paths. Some align themselves with the welfare agency, enforcing bureaucratic practices rather than scrutinizing them. Others emphasize their neutrality and judicial role, scrutinizing and aligning agency practices with the law's underlying purposes.

The ability to adapt rules, and thereby to exercise discretion, is an entrenched feature of bureaucracies. Variously described as a boon and a blight, the exercise of discretion can make bureaucracies function better or worse. Workers can use discretion to individualize rules, fine-tuning their application so that general laws fit individual circumstances. Or workers can use discretion to "process rather than engage" clients, mechanizing the application of rules so that clients can be moved quickly through the system (Maynard-Moody and Musheno 2003, 12). How, why, and when workers in public welfare bureaucracies choose either of these routes is the subject of much scholarly inquiry (Lipsky 1980, 1984; Brodkin 1986, 1997; Handler 1986; Meyers, Glaser, and MacDonald 1998; Hasenfeld 2000; Sandfort 2000; Lurie 2006; Fording, Soss, and Schram

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2007). The literature focuses primarily on the least powerfully situated worker in the organizational hierarchy of welfare bureaucracies: the frontline worker. This study focuses instead on a more powerfully positioned and neglected bureaucratic actor: the administrative law judge.

Administrative law judges preside over quasi-judicial hearings that are triggered if participants challenge a denial, discontinuance, or reduction in public welfare benefits. Hearings are deployed only if a citizen formally challenges the state, and judges have the power to reverse frontline decisions. The style of decision making differs from that employed by workers on the front lines. Frontline decision making is hierarchical. It focuses on processing information accurately, efficiently, and consistently (Mashaw 1983; Adler 2003, 2006). In contrast, administrative law judges have the autonomy, professional knowledge, and skills to make individualized and complex determinations (Simon 1983). But as their title implies, administrative law judges are also bureaucratic actors, steeped in the language and lore of the bureaucracy. They possess a vast knowledge of its norms and expectations.

By drawing on ethnographic observations of fair hearings, as well as on interviews with administrative law judges and appellants, this study seeks to understand how administrative law judges exercise the discretion granted them by their professional training and their role in the bureaucracy. It investigates how they navigate the tension caused by their multiple roles. The study adds to understanding not only of this particular bureaucratic actor but also of the different ways that skilled, professional workers use discretion in public welfare bureaucracies.

Context and Background

The predominant view of welfare bureaucracies is that they are an institutional site whose power is steady, controlling, and often oppressive toward assertions of individual rights or preferences. As Joel Handler (1986) explains, welfare bureaucracies are sites of both social control and social help. Although they provide life-sustaining benefits, they also "regulate, exclude, and punish deviant behavior" (Handler 1996, 124). The work they do, Yeheskel Hasenfeld argues (2000, 329), is "moral work." It involves sorting people to distinguish the supposedly deserving from those deemed undeserving. This sorting typically takes the organizational form of bureaucratic processing. Unlike professional treatment, which is individualized and participatory, bureaucratic processing is often characterized by a rote and mechanical application of the rules by low-skilled frontline workers (Simon 1983). Discretion is channeled by organizational incentives. These incentives encourage workers to standardize assistance and use service options that fit the needs of the agency rather than those of the individual (Brodkin 1997). Workers exercise their discretion negatively, choosing to apply rules narrowly

and overriding participants' "substantive status or individual preference" (Brodkin and Majmundar 2010, 828). Eligible participants may be wrongfully denied benefits because of the high barriers to claiming them (Brodkin and Majmundar 2010).

Designed to correct such errors, the fair-hearing system provides a forum for resolving disputes between frontline workers and citizens. As noted above, the method of decision making in hearings differs from that on the front lines. A form of bureaucratic legalism predominates there; guided by the principles of accuracy, efficiency, and uniformity, nonprofessional bureaucrats closely apply detailed rules (Mashaw 1983; Adler 2010; Kagan 2010). In contrast, hearings employ a form of adversarial legalism. Guided by individualized justice, not bureaucratic uniformity and efficiency, highly trained and skilled professionals weigh conflicting interpretations of laws and facts (Mashaw 1983; Adler 2010). The difference between the two settings is perhaps best captured in their clashing views on the use of discretion. Frontline discretion is primarily considered something to be tamed and curtailed, but judges are expected to exercise discretion; it is the hallmark of their professional role.

Judges, however, are also bureaucratic actors. In over half of the states they are part of the state welfare bureaucracy that has regulatory and supervisory oversight of local welfare agencies (Brodoff 2008).[1] Unlike more formal judicial systems, the administrative hearing system imposes no clear dividing lines to distinguish the roles of the respective government officials. Judges and bureaucrats are part of the same welfare apparatus, although they have different roles. Through their daily interactions with bureaucratic officials, judges may be "'captured' by the agency" (Bernard 2003, 17). Judges also are limited to reviewing the disputes before them. These are shaped and defined by bureaucratic practices below. Thus, although hearings are organizationally separate from the front lines and the everyday workings of the bureaucracy, there is potential for seepage between the two; judges may use their discretion to replicate the norms and expectations of bureaucratic decision making, failing to check its worst excesses. The current study refers to this as the "bureaucratic approach." Or judges may reinforce their designated role as adjudicators of disputes and may safeguard against arbitrary state action. The study calls this the "adjudicator approach."

This study addresses several questions. What types of disputes are appealed? How do the nature and quality of these disputes affect the adjudication process? How do judges with bureaucratic and adjudicator approaches, respectively, exercise discretion in executing the key tasks

1. In the state where the study was conducted, local agencies (some operated by cities, others by counties, depending on the locale) administer the program and make the initial determination of benefits. The state agency has supervisory responsibility and also operates the fair-hearing system.

of judging? How do these different approaches affect the adjudication of disputes?

Methodology

This study draws on data from two different fair-hearing units located in a state in the northeastern United States. One unit is located in a suburban area, and the other is in an urban area. The data are the result of a focused ethnography, a type of sociological ethnography that examines specific and well-defined interactions, acts, or social situations in the field rather than an entire system or culture (Knoblauch 2005). Focused ethnography is characterized by relatively short-term field visits and intensive data collection. Much of the data come from recordings, as well as field notes. They allow the researcher verbatim and oral access to naturally occurring talk in a social interaction. Focused ethnography is especially suited to the observation of hearing interactions, which are episodically structured exchanges bounded in space and time.

The two fair-hearing units in this study are part of the same state welfare bureaucracy. They thus are governed by the same rules and procedures but differ in size and complexity. The urban fair-hearing unit hears over 76,000 cases a year and represents a very large and complex organization involved in the mass processing of cases. The suburban unit hears less than a thousand and is representative of a smaller and less complex bureaucracy. The inclusion of both units allows this study to distinguish the features and characteristics common to the adjudication process from those related to the demands of each bureaucratic setting.

I conducted observations of 70 hearings presided over by seven judges in the suburban unit and 129 hearings presided over by 10 judges in the urban unit. The observations in the suburban unit took place for a total of 4 months during 2007 and 2008. The observations in the urban unit took place over a 3-month period in 2009. I conducted all hearing observations. I did not use a formal selection process in deciding which suburban unit hearings to observe. On days when there was a single calendar (i.e., a single judge conducted all hearings), I observed hearings in the order in which they occurred. On days when there were two calendars in that unit, I chose hearings on the basis of which appellant appeared first and was ready to proceed. In the urban unit, approximately 35 judges hear cases on any given day, and calendars are assigned by subject matter (e.g., for hearings related to food stamps, general public assistance, and medical programs). I did not choose the hearings observed in the urban unit but was assigned by the unit's supervising judge to observe a particular judge. Assignments were based on a combination of factors, including the hearing judge's availability and willingness to participate, as well as the nature of the cases he or

she would preside over on the observation day. I commonly requested assignment to hearings that involved public assistance cases rather than hearings on food stamp cases. In between hearings, I also spoke with the judges.

During the hearings, I maintained a detailed log, recording both what was said (as much as I was able to record) and other observations. These other observations include physical descriptions of the parties and the environment of the room; obvious states of emotions (e.g., anger, crying, laughter); the parties' demeanor, tone, and style (e.g., authoritarian, conciliatory, antagonistic); the level of formality (e.g., how strictly or loosely procedural rules on evidence and testimony were followed); and quality of personal interactions (e.g., friendly, hostile, apathetic). I also recorded routine and standardized data for each hearing observation. These include the parties present, the issue that prompted the hearing, and the length of the hearing. I transferred field jottings and observations into full field notes immediately after actual observations. I used in-process memos to "identify and develop analytic themes" (Emerson, Fretz, and Shaw 1995, 100). The state agency responsible for conducting the hearings also provided an audio recording of each urban-unit hearing I observed. I had these recordings transcribed.

I conducted formal in-depth interviews with five judges in the suburban unit and five judges in the urban unit. I used a semistructured interview guide consisting of open-ended questions on their initial training and experience, their approach to conducting hearings, their perception of participants and the hearing process, and their decision-making processes. The interviews lasted between 1 and 2½ hours. Because I was not granted permission to tape-record these interviews, I only took notes. To ensure the accuracy of the notes, I sent each interviewed judge a copy of the composed notes from our interview and asked him or her to check the contents for accuracy. Seven of the 10 judges responded to this request, providing corrections and edits.

Nine appellants from the suburban unit and 21 appellants from the urban unit were interviewed by a research assistant. If I were able to do so, I approached appellants after their hearing, giving them a flyer on the study, inviting them to participate in an interview at a later date, and requesting their phone number so they could be contacted for a follow-up interview. The 30 interviewed appellants responded to the flyer or phone calls and represent at least one appellant from 12 of the 17 judges observed. I used these interviews as a way to triangulate the data from hearing observations. Because the interview data come from a different collection method (interviews) and a different data source (appellants), they provide a more comprehensive understanding of the data than could be obtained from observation notes alone (Creswell 2007). The semistructured interview consisted of open-ended questions about the interviewees' reason for appealing and their experience at

their hearing. It solicited their perceptions of the judge and the agency representative. It also asked them to characterize the treatment they received and perceptions concerning their ability to present their case. The interviews were recorded and transcribed verbatim.

The unit of analysis for this study is the case, which consists primarily of the hearing I observed. The focus is on the conversations and interactions that took place in the hearing room, not on the outcome of the hearing (i.e., who won or lost) or the soundness of the legal positions held by the parties (the appellant and the agency).[2] Rather, the study focuses on how the appellant's case was presented, discussed, and shaped by the parties through the course of the hearing. I use my informal conversations with the judges in between cases (these were sometimes but not always about the individual cases I observed) and the subsequent interviews with the appellants to confirm my observations. These interactions are also used to further explore the parties' perceptions and experiences of the hearing process.

Data analysis began with a review of the field notes and transcripts. In the first reading, I identified major themes and noted them in the margins of the pages. I then used HyperRESEARCH, a computer software program designed for the analysis of qualitative data, to code my field notes and transcripts. Using grounded theory conventions, I began analysis by conducting line-by-line open coding; I attached descriptive codes to lines of data and identified similarities or variations in the text (Charmaz 2006). Next, I conducted focused coding, which involves identifying the most noteworthy and frequent line-by-line codes. I also attempted to choose codes that best categorize the salient dimensions of the emerging themes and patterns (Charmaz 2006). I then conducted axial coding, which builds codes into categories, defines the properties and dimensions of each category, and draws contrasts (Charmaz 2006). In the final step, all codes are integrated through a theoretical coding process that identifies the central themes in the findings (Charmaz 2006). Coding was an iterative process; I returned to previously coded transcripts and field notes to confirm, refute, or modify codes as they developed. I used analytical memos throughout the process. First, I employed them to define and describe various codes. I then used them

2. A particular outcome may be related to the thoroughness and fairness of the process and procedures used during hearings. It also may stem from the provisions of law and from the relative strengths and weaknesses of the parties' cases. Thus, even a model hearing, in which appellants have a full and fair opportunity to present their case, can result in negative outcomes for appellants. Because outcomes are such an imprecise measure of the quality of the process, they are not included in this study. Also, research firmly establishes the importance of procedural justice; people care about winning or losing but care even more about the fairness of the procedures. The components of procedural justice include voice, neutrality, respectful treatment, and trustworthiness (Casper, Tyler, and Fisher 1988; Sunshine and Tyler 2003; Tyler 2006). Thus, the study of process is valuable in its own right.

to rebuild the coded data and establish a conceptual framework by exploring categories' relationships with subcategories (Charmaz 2006).

An example may be useful. In developing the category of judges whose approach I characterize as bureaucratic, I began with such first-level and focused codes as "blaming the appellant," "joining," "shifting the focus," and "narrowing the issues." I use the code "blaming the appellant" to identify situations in which the agency or judge highlights the appellant's mistakes or negligence, poses questions that assume the appellant is at fault, or asks questions that are not stated neutrally. I assign the code "joining" to situations in which the agency and judge act as one front, joining together during the hearing to interrogate the appellant. I employ the code "shifting the focus" to indicate that the agency or the judge shifts the focus away from the agency and onto the appellant. The code "narrowing the issues" describes instances in which the judge narrowed the issues and emphasized process over substance. I used these codes and others to develop the axial category "bureaucratic judging." I defined the dimensions and properties of the category through analytic memos. The category describes judges who rely on a form of excessive proceduralism, both in defining the issues in dispute and determining what evidence to accept. Theoretical coding occurred when I used this category and contrasted it with the one for judges who employed an adjudicatory approach (described below). I employ the two categories to describe the defining and contrary ways in which judges use discretion during hearings.

Findings

Nature and Quality of Disputes

Fair hearings are triggered by individuals who receive benefits through the welfare agency. They usually arise as an appeal of a formal notice in which the agency advises the recipient that his or her benefits are being denied, discontinued, or reduced. Appellants can also request a hearing without such a notice if they think that the agency made an error; however, the vast majority of appeals are triggered by a formal notice. The state in this study classifies issues into two main categories: eligibility issues and those related to work activities. Eligibility issues can arise if there are questions about whether the appellant established his or her eligibility for assistance. Issues related to work activities can arise if there are questions about whether the appellant complied with rules that condition receipt of assistance on engagement in work activities or whether the recipient is exempt from those rules.[3]

3. Federal and state law requires public assistance recipients in the subject county and city to engage in such work activities as attending assessment appointments, searching for a job, and working in subsidized or unsubsidized employment or work-experience pro-

Disputes arising from eligibility and work-rules issues can be substantive or procedural. There are substantive eligibility rules concerning income and resource limits. Procedural rules specify steps for proving eligibility. These steps include the submission of specified documents and mandated face-to-face appointments (commonly called recertification). Likewise, compliance with the work rules involves a mix of substantive and procedural activities for both participants and welfare workers. Workers' substantive tasks include establishing and evaluating recipients' ability to engage in work activities or their reasons for not attending a specific work-related appointment or activity. One of the agency's procedural tasks involves informing participants of the date and place of mandated work activities. It also is charged with monitoring participants' attendance. For the participants, procedural obligations include notifying the agency if they cannot attend a mandated appointment and providing documentation of the reasons.

Whether a fair hearing arises from a dispute about process or substance is in part determined by organizational practices and procedures. Welfare bureaucracies often engage in excess proceduralism, requiring an abundance of documents and verification procedures. As a consequence, cases that make their way into the fair-hearing system often reflect this emphasis on procedural compliance. As will be more fully explained in the next section, some judges reinforce this emphasis, narrowly defining the scope of disputes to focus on the appellant's procedural noncompliance. However, the agency's compliance with procedural rules can also be the focus of a dispute. Especially in very large and complex bureaucracies, the need to process a massive number of cases can exacerbate the worst excesses of such proceduralism by generating an avalanche of processing mistakes. This, in turn, can shift the focus of fair hearings from the appellant's procedural noncompliance to the agency's, consequently altering the ways in which judges exercise their discretion.

The contrast between the urban and suburban units illustrates this dynamic. The urban welfare agency handles approximately 186,000 cases a year; the suburban agency handles about 11,000. Although the size of a bureaucracy does not necessarily and inevitably determine its propensity for making mistakes, many of the cases in the urban unit are riddled with the types of procedural errors that can emanate from the mass processing of cases. Notices are incomplete or incorrect. They miss or misstate essential and required information (e.g., the date of a mandated appointment). Because of incorrect computer inputs or a failure to update information, notices are also sent to the wrong addresses.

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grams. Failure to comply with the work rules results in the imposition of a sanction, which is a pro rata reduction of the violator's portion of the grant. Sanctions can be appealed through the fair-hearing process. Recipients also may appeal determinations as to whether disability or other factors make them eligible for exemptions from the work rules.

Case files lack essential documents, such as proof that the agency sent the appellant a letter advising him or her of an appointment. At other times, the case records contradict the notices sent to appellants (e.g., the file and notice record different dates for an alleged missed appointment). In the urban unit, both judges and agency representatives routinely anticipate and acknowledge the ubiquity of such errors. As one agency representative drily observed when confronted with yet another defective notice, "Surprise, surprise, this one is less than perfect." Cases in the suburban unit have fewer such defects and are more likely to proceed to a full hearing on the substance of the dispute.

As a consequence of the norms in the urban unit, judges there have less opportunity than their suburban counterparts to use their professional skills and discretion. Cases with procedural irregularities are easily and quickly resolved; according to the state agency, the agency withdraws its notice of discontinuance of welfare benefits in nearly 60 percent of all urban unit cases, obviating the need for a full hearing.[4] Judges may choose to ignore the agency's procedural breaches and proceed to the merits of cases, but they rarely do so because the errors are ubiquitous and obvious. Also, legal principles emphasize due process and the adherence to procedural rules.[5] As a practical matter, agency withdrawals also provide judges with a quick shortcut for resolving disputes because they eliminate the need for a full hearing and a decision on the merits. Thus, judges in both the bureaucratic and adjudicator categories routinely accept and encourage agency offers to withdraw defective notices of benefit discontinuance. Even after the agency withdraws the discontinuance notice, disputes persist over substantive issues. For example, the agency may withdraw the discontinuance notice because it did not correctly identify the date on which the recipient missed a mandated work appointment. However, an error in the discontinuance notice does not necessarily mean that the appellant did not miss the scheduled appointment. The urban unit differs from the suburban counterpart in that most suburban cases are ready to be adjudicated at the scheduled hearing; the procedural errors committed by the agency prevent substantive disputes concerning the work rules from surfacing at hearings. Reflecting on his role in such cases, one judge observed that hearings are "band-aids. You are just slapping a band-aid on the problem. You can't solve all the problems."

In sum, bureaucratic practices below shape the nature and quality of

4. In contrast, the withdrawal rate in the suburban unit is only 14 percent.

5. Due process is a principle embedded in the US Constitution; the Fourteenth Amendment prohibits the deprivation of property without due process of law. Its application to welfare benefits was established by the US Supreme Court in the landmark case *Goldberg v. Kelly* (397 U.S. 254 [1970]). The court held that the due process clause requires pretermination hearings before welfare benefits are discontinued or reduced. A central component of due process is that adequate notice be provided before a negative action is taken; thus, the defective notices described herein constitute a breach of this requirement.

the disputes that make their way into the fair-hearing system above. The disputes generated by a poorly run bureaucracy are different, both qualitatively and quantitatively, than disputes generated by one that is run more effectively. The influence of such practices has consequences for the role and function of judges. Not all of the urban unit's cases involve procedural mistakes by the agency, but many do. When procedural mistakes occur, judges function as traffic cops, directing the bureaucratic traffic generated by agency processing errors, rather than making evaluative and complex judgments about the underlying disputes.

Exercising Discretion

As noted above, judges occupy a unique perch. Part welfare system bureaucrat and part judicial officer, they can have characteristics of both. Their professional training and designated role within the bureaucracy provide a different and fresh perspective from which they can scrutinize agency practices and procedures, as well as the decisions that result. But they can also choose not to cast a distinguishing eye, instead exercising their discretion in ways that are aligned with prevailing practices on the front line. Earlier research by this author (Lens 2009, forthcoming) develops typologies of judging; some judges, whom I called bureaucrats, predominantly choose to align themselves with the agency whose decisions they review. They generally act in ways similar to front-line workers, enforcing the norms and practices of the bureaucracy. Thus, they fail to fully scrutinize those practices. On the other end of the spectrum are judges I call adjudicators.[6] They continually challenge and scrutinize the agency, emphasizing their neutrality and role as a judicial official. This study extends the earlier analysis to closely dissect how judges in each of these categories execute certain judicial tasks and to examine how these different approaches affect the processing of disputes. For purposes of illustration, I choose the cases that provide the most contrast and are most representative of each approach.

In both counties, judges must be law school graduates admitted to the state's bar. They are selected through the state's civil service system and must pass the appropriate civil service exam. They are authorized to preside at hearings by the State Commissioner of Social Services, whom they represent. They come from a wide range of legal backgrounds. Some begin in private practice, others in public interest law, still others in state or local law enforcement. The state makes efforts to recruit individuals who have worked as legal aid attorneys or have experience

6. As the earlier research reveals, judges can be assigned places on a continuum between the adjudicator type and the bureaucratic type. All exhibit the characteristics of each type to some extent. The same judge is capable of acting as an adjudicator in one hearing and as a bureaucrat in another (especially judges in the middle of the continuum), although one approach typically predominates.

with low-income populations. Prior experience as a judge is not a job requirement; among the 10 judges interviewed, only two had such experience. Of the 17 judges observed in both units, five are female and 12 male. Two of the 17 judges are people of color. Some have served as administrative law judges for many years; others had only a few years' experience.

Judging is a highly skilled and professionalized endeavor. In part, the variability of approaches among judges is possible because of the wide discretion inherent in judging. Although the rules of the adversarial process set the structure for hearings (e.g., requiring coequal participation by the parties), there is ample room for the judge to determine what is heard and how. Specifically, two key tasks shape how a hearing proceeds. First, the judge must decide how the dispute's issues and parameters will be defined. Second, the judge must decide what facts are relevant to the dispute as defined and what evidence is required to prove those facts. Although judges are expected to be impartial and are not expected to play an investigatory role, hearings differ from more formal judicial proceedings in that the regulations permit the judge to assist the appellant in eliciting documents and testimony, especially if the appellant has difficulty questioning a witness. The state regulations also provide that the technical rules of evidence need not apply. Judges thus have more flexibility in presiding over hearings than they have in other sorts of proceedings. The ways in which judges execute these tasks reveal how they perceive themselves in relation to the welfare bureaucracy.

Defining the dispute: process versus substance.—Both frontline and judicial decision making involve applying a specific law or rule to a specific set of facts. However, rule-following has different meanings in administrative and judicial contexts. Within the judicial context, rule-following is a highly skilled endeavor. As one judge put it, "If I don't follow the rules, they can just get someone across the street to do it." It requires a series of analytical and interpretive steps, including identifying the relevant law and interpreting it within the context of specific facts. It also requires recognizing unintended consequences as well as discrepancies between the law as applied and the law's primary purpose. Decisions are fashioned to account for these factors. As Robert Kagan (2010, 171) notes, a judge "looks backwards to preexisting rules (precedents) to discern what they seem to require, but then 'looks forward' to assess the consequences of following an ostensibly applicable rule." Judges then use "judicial creativity" to provide a different interpretation of the rule or to create a new rule (172).

In contrast, rule-following by frontline workers is more routinized and less analytical. They pay little attention to the general purposes underlying the rule. Although some caseworkers may look for ways around the rules if they deem a client deserving (Maynard-Moody and Musheno 2003), the default position, especially within welfare bureaucracies, is

the rigid, mechanical application of rules within harsh service technologies. A web of formal rules and informal practices requires public assistance recipients to comply with numerous processing demands. For example, they are required to contact the agency at certain junctures or to provide particular documents at specific times (Brodkin and Majmundar 2010). As a consequence, rules are often reduced to process at the expense of substance; for example, a rule that requires participants to contact the agency if they cannot attend a scheduled appointment becomes more important than the overall purpose of the meeting or the substantive reason for missing it.

Judges can choose to replicate and reinforce this approach by focusing on participants' procedural missteps, as the agency defines them, rather than on the substantive dispute underlying such events. The urban unit hearing for Rebecca Jones provides an illustrative example of this approach.[7] In the Jones case, the agency discontinued the appellant's assistance when she allegedly failed to attend a recertification appointment and to provide verification of her work hours and residence. The appellant's explanation, offered at the beginning of the hearing, was that she was in school on the date and at the time of the appointment. She argued that the agency knew she was in school and that she went back to the agency at a later date to provide the requested documents. The judge ignored this explanation, focusing instead on her alleged failure to contact the agency and explain her absence:

Appellant (AP): Uh, I was in school that whole time and they knew because I . . . I gave them the letter.

Judge (J): That's all good and well but once they give you an appointment notice they are expecting something from you by that appointment date. When they don't get it they take action against you.

AP: All right.

J: I don't know why you wouldn't pick up the phone to try and contact them: "I'm not going to be able to make it but I'm working on it and I could get it to you by this date." Why wouldn't you do something like that? Why wouldn't you follow through?

AP: When I called they messed it up. They always—the phone keeps ringing, or closes down.

J: You mean just based on past experiences?

AP: Yes.

J: That's not what happened this time.

AP: It happened this time also. When you call it rings out or just goes—the line goes dead.

[There is a brief deviation from this line of questioning when the judge asks the appellant where she went to school and whether it was part-time or full-time.]

7. To protect the confidentiality of the judges and the appellants, all names of hearing participants are pseudonyms.

J: The . . . uh . . . appointment notice . . . um [pause] gives you a phone number to call, specifically to your worker, that number.

AP: Right, but he's . . . he's not my worker. So I didn't even see him the next time I came in.

J: But regardless, that's the number they tell you to contact.

AP: Okay.

J: You know and it's assigned to an aide—a worker or an aide. That's the number they are telling you to contact if you are not able to make the appointment or unable to get the documents by the due date.

By narrowing the issue to whether the appellant called the agency, the judge chose to focus solely on rules of process, not on substance. In essence, she enforced the agency's rules rather than scrutinizing them. Thus, she fails to engage in the complex acts that constitute judging. A more judicial approach would involve considering the agency's application of its rules as well as the appellant's actions. It would consider the purposes of rules on recertification (to prove ongoing eligibility, as the appellant did) as well as whether the agency's practices and procedures interfere with the appellant's ability to comply. Instead of dismissing the appellant's complaints about the agency's phone systems, the judge could have examined how the system might prevent participants from complying with the agency's directive to call if they cannot attend a scheduled appointment. The judge also could explore whether the agency interfered with the goals of welfare law (e.g., to encourage self-sufficiency) by unilaterally scheduling a recertification appointment when the appellant was in school. By doing so, the agency forced the appellant to choose between attending the appointment and attending school.

However, the observations suggest that judges who follow a bureaucratic approach are hesitant to delve into such substantive applications or interpretation of the law. A suburban unit hearing for Danielle Adams provides another illustrative example. Like the preceding case, the Adams case involves a discontinuance of assistance for a failure to attend a recertification appointment and to submit requested documents. The appellant is cognitively impaired and came to the hearing with a case manager for the disabled. In response to the judge's question about why she failed to attend the appointment, the appellant explained that she "sometimes forgets." She said that the notice advising her of the recertification appointment "didn't register" but that she subsequently came in with the requested papers and proved her continuing eligibility. In response, the judge prompted the agency to submit evidence that it properly mailed the notice of appointment. The disabled-services case manager, who is not affiliated with the welfare agency, explained that the appellant has an IQ of 64. The case manager also testified that she helped the appellant to reschedule the appointment and submit the requested documents when the appellant showed her the appointment

letter a few days after the scheduled date of the recertification appointment. She also explained that she informed the appellant's welfare caseworker of the appellant's intellectual impairment but that the agency repeatedly denied the appellant assistance. The judge advised the appellant to reapply for benefits, to attend all her appointments, and to submit her documents. After the hearing, and after the appellant and her case manager left the room, the judge explained that he did not have the authority to make a judgment on the appellant's cognitive ability.

The judge's use of discretion suggests that he operates with a very narrow and constricted view of his professional judgment and authority. He chose to ignore the underlying purposes of the law and to define the dispute as the agency did: a dispute about process (whether the agency properly mailed the letter; whether the appellant attended the appointment) rather than about substance (whether the appellant fully understands what she is required to do; whether she is eligible to be recertified). His unwillingness to judge the appellant's cognitive ability reveals a reluctance to exercise his professional skills and make an independent assessment of credibility and fault. Finally, in encouraging the appellant to resolve the dispute by reapplying, the judge suggests that the agency's procedural demands limit his power and fully constrain his authority.

Judges who follow an adjudicator approach exercise their power and authority very differently than bureaucratic judges do. Adjudicators intervene more actively in the dispute before them, remedying instead of replicating the consequences of the agency's heavy reliance on procedural compliance. This is illustrated by the hearings for Michelle Tyler and Robert Morris. Handled by different judges in the suburban unit, these hearings both involve missing documents.

The Morris hearing involved an appeal of a denial of an emergency grant to restore gas and electricity service shut off for nonpayment. The agency denied the appellant's request because he did not submit the required documents. Specifically, he did not submit verification that he was unable to enter into an agreement with the utility company to reduce payments in order to avoid the shutoff. In the Adams hearing, the judge strictly adhered to the agency's procedural demands; in contrast, the judge presiding over the Morris hearing adopted a flexible stance, asking the agency to work it out. The agency agreed to give the appellant additional time to submit the document. The judge also retained her authority over the dispute, suspending the hearing until that afternoon in order to give the appellant time to secure the document. He did, and the dispute was resolved.

The judge in the Tyler hearing also intervened to resolve a dispute regarding missing documents. The agency denied Tyler's request for reimbursement of day care expenses because she failed to submit re-

quired documents. She claimed that she submitted the documents and "desperately" needed reimbursement. She also indicated that she needed the agency to provide proof of her ongoing child care benefits so that she could continue working. The judge halted the hearing and asked the agency's representative to contact the appellant's welfare caseworker, confirming to the caseworker that the appellant provided the required records. After the representative did so, the judge arranged, through the caseworker, for the appellant to receive agency approval that day for both ongoing and retroactive day care benefits.

In sum, appellants in all four of the described hearings faced a crisis of need, but the judges in the Tyler and Morris hearings reacted very differently than the judges in the Jones and Adams hearings. The judges in the Tyler and Morris proceedings circumvented any procedural irregularity by using their professional discretion and authority to cut through the red tape and resolve the dispute. Their actions reveal a view of the law that is more flexible and expansive than the views held by their counterparts in the Jones and Adams hearings. Part of their role, the observations suggest, is to ensure that the parties meet the goals and purposes underlying the law and regulations. Another part is to ensure that otherwise eligible participants are not denied aid because of agency practices that impose barriers to claiming welfare benefits (Brodkin and Majmundar 2010).

Determining the facts and choosing evidence.—Judges can use their discretion to narrow or expand the set of facts deemed relevant in a dispute. They also decide which sources of proof they will accept as evidence to corroborate these facts. On the front lines, relevant facts and sources of proof are narrowly defined. Agency commands are typically segmented into discrete and specific acts. For example, the agency directs a recipient to attend a work activity on a given date. If the recipient misses an appointment, the agency requires an explanation and corresponding proof of what happened on that day; the backdrop and circumstances of participants' lives are usually deemed irrelevant. Bureaucratic judges often adopt this approach, narrowly limiting the range of relevant facts and relevant proof.

An illustrative example comes from the hearing held in the suburban unit for Amanda Ryan. In this case, the appellant challenged a work sanction. She explained that her child needs continuous care because he has a traumatic brain injury from being struck by a car. She said that she told the agency she can only work when he is in school, and she often leaves work to care for him. She testified that the school was closed on the day she missed her work appointment. As proof, she submitted a letter in which her physician confirmed the child's brain injury and need for 24-hour care. However, the judge deemed a much narrower set of facts and proof to be relevant; he wanted confirmation from the school that it was closed on the day she missed the appointment, and

the appellant did not have it. The appellant considered the basic facts of her life to be sufficient proof to explain her absence on that day; providing care for a severely injured child requires her constant attention. To the judge, they were not sufficient; his concern fell on the date in question, not the larger events surrounding it.

A similar case from the urban unit also involved a missed appointment. The appellant was pregnant and explained that she received treatment for preeclampsia on the date of the appointment. She testified that she gave birth early, about 2 weeks after her missed appointment, and that her newborn remained in the hospital for 2 weeks after the birth. She produced a doctor's note indicating that she required urgent care during that time period, but the note was dated after the date of the missed work appointment. The judge, like the judge in the Ryan hearing, discounted the appellant's proof, telling her: "The only appointment we really want to focus on at this moment is the April 28 appointment with the city." Also like the judge in the Ryan hearing, he insisted that the only acceptable proof is verification from a third party; in this instance, he required proof that she had a medical appointment on the date in question.

Both judges refused to consider as relevant the facts and circumstances of the appellants' lives (the burdens of caring for a severely disabled child in the first case and the chaos and challenge of a high-risk pregnancy in the second). This narrow focus precluded any consideration of whether the imposition of sanctions in those circumstances was consistent with the overall objectives and goals of the work rules. In essence, both judges forfeited their judicial prerogative to analyze and interpret the relevant rules. They failed to examine whether the rules' underlying purposes and intent were lost in the minutiae and inflexibility of their application. In short, they refused to engage in one of the elementary tasks of judging, which demands more than a rote and rigid application of the rules.

The observations suggest that adjudicators are also confined by the rules regarding sanctions. The rules permit the agency to impose a sanction if a recipient misses a single appointment, no matter what other work activities they engage in. However, adjudicators are more flexible than bureaucratic judges in the proof they require. For example, adjudicators accepted an appellant's testimony as proof of an illness but could require a physician's verification.[8] They also seek ways to mitigate

8. Documentary proof is helpful in all legal proceedings, including administrative hearings, but it is not required. A judge may exercise discretion in deciding which form of proof (the written or the spoken word) is acceptable in a case. As one judge explained in an interview, "paper talks," but judges are in fact encouraged to rely on the testimony of the appellant. Another judge explained an "unwritten policy" that documentation is not needed to establish an appellant's credibility. One may reasonably conclude that the bureaucratic judges apply a stricter standard of proof than is required.

the harshness of some of the work rules. During an interview, for example, one judge criticized a law requiring participants to comply with the work rules while they earn a 4-year college degree. He asserted that the law "penalizes people for being in college." He explained that his decisions direct the agency to find a work assignment that is close to the appellant's school or to provide sufficient time between school and the work assignment, so that appellants can get to both. In this way, he is able to align frontline practices with a primary goal of the work rules: to encourage self-sufficiency.

Bureaucratic and adjudicator judges also differ in the extent to which they rely on agency records. Judges who operate under a bureaucratic approach are more likely to rely on agency records as the primary (and sometimes only) source of information used to decide a dispute. As noted above, the hearing system requires that the agency record must first be free of procedural errors and include properly addressed notices and supporting documents. Once this threshold is met, bureaucratic judges are seldom willing to accept arguments that contradict the records. Such judges treat these records as the agency does, considering them to be repositories of the most true and accurate version of the events being contested. Such a perspective makes it difficult for the appellant to contest or contradict the records. If an event is not recorded in the file, the agency and some judges assume that it did not occur. For example, disputes commonly arise over whether appellants submitted requested documents to the agency; appellants often insist that the agency lost the documents, and the agency often insists that it never received the documents. Compared to counterparts who have an adjudicator approach, judges with a bureaucratic bent are less receptive to such testimony. Similarly, if the case file does not include a notation that the appellant called the agency, bureaucratic judges typically disbelieve or ignore the appellant's testimony that he or she called. In short, bureaucratic judges routinely reject testimony about events if the testimony cannot be corroborated through bureaucratic verification.

In contrast, adjudicators are more skeptical of the accuracy of agency records. In an illustrative example from an urban unit hearing, the agency's records indicated that the appellant was working and thus ineligible for assistance. Casting doubt on the veracity of those records, the judge noted that they are only "internal worksheets" and that "it could be somebody else with a similar Social Security number or something." Likewise, such judges are less likely to assume that agency records are complete. In an urban unit hearing for Nancy Miller, the appellant could not produce proof that she went to the agency to make up a work appointment she missed while recovering from illness. The judge did not rebuff her; instead, he acknowledged that the agency often fails to record such contacts, telling her: "They're gonna drop the ball half the

time, even if you showed up there and [they] forgot to put down: 'Oh, yeah. She was here and I had to turn her away.'"

Differences in judges' notions on what constitutes acceptable proof and in their willingness to rely (or not) on agency records mean that different judges may handle the same issues in very different ways. The hearings for Richard Mincy and Paula Masters graphically demonstrate this. Different judges presided over the hearings, but they involved the same issue: whether the appellant was medically able to comply with work rules. In the Mincy hearing from the suburban unit, the judge chose to narrow the acceptable proof to a standard employability form completed by a physician and submitted by the agency. The form indicated that the appellant was employable but had some limitations. It provided minimal information on the appellant's medical condition and used check marks to indicate the appellant's ability to perform a variety of activities (e.g., standing, walking). The appellant attempted to submit additional evidence, both through testimony and more detailed medical reports, that he suffers from several ailments and that the combination of conditions makes it difficult for him to work. The judge rebuffed his proof, telling him, "It's not relevant. What's relevant is whether or not you could work." He continued: "The issue is employability, not what disease you have." The judge further explained: "I'm not a doctor. I can't make a diagnosis."

In contrast, the file in the Masters hearing from the urban unit also included evidence that the appellant was employable with limitations, but the judge treated this evidence as the beginning of the inquiry, not the end. Unlike the judge in the Mincy hearing, the judge in the Masters hearing positioned the appellant as a source of authority for her own medical condition, asking her, "Why do you feel you can't work?" She noted she had one problem, and to insure that he had a complete picture of her many ailments, the judge asked whether she also "ha[d] any other problems?" He methodically elicited both her oral testimony and the evidence from medical records she brought. He occasionally read from the records, which detailed her many aliments, the treatments she received, and the list of her medications.

In the Masters hearing, the judge gave the appellant the space and time she needed to present her version of the facts. In doing so, he fulfilled one of the primary tasks of judging: to elicit testimony and evidence from each side of the dispute so that he can reconcile conflicting facts and make a decision. In the Mincy hearing, the judge did exactly the opposite. She refused to consider any evidence from the appellant. She relied solely on an agency-approved employability form, suggesting that facts are disposable unless they are accepted in the bureaucratic realm. Her refusal to consider the appellant's evidence seemed to indicate that her decision was preordained and the hearing itself a formality.

Discussion

Bureaucratic administration and judicial decision making are often at odds with one another. As Jerry Mashaw observes, adjudication "is profoundly anti-bureaucratic" (1992, 1055–56); adjudication emphasizes individualized justice, but bureaucratic administration is concerned with uniformity. The adversarial system is premised on conflict and the legitimacy of opposing views, but administration is premised on the consistent application of one view. Bureaucracies run on hierarchy and centralization; adjudications are decentralized and nonhierarchical.[9] Adjudication emphasizes the use of discretion; administration deemphasizes it. Bureaucracies that use both bureaucratic and adjudicative types of decision making (most do) are constructed, in essence, to continually reenact the classic conflicts: rules versus discretion, the individual versus the masses, and hierarchy versus decentralization.

These tensions can be beneficial. A decision-making system attuned to the individual can fine-tune laws meant for mass application and prevent unjust or unintended consequences. A surfeit of professional knowledge, discretion, and skill can act as an antidote to an excess of rules and an unskilled workforce. A system that requires participation by appellants, as does the adversarial process, can compensate for their lack of input in decision making on the front lines.

However, any seepage between the two systems must be guarded against if these benefits are to occur. As a threshold requirement, the disputes generated on the front lines must be ripe for resolution by the fair-hearing system. This study's findings suggest that too many agency errors, especially errors of process, can prevent the ultimate resolution of disputes. Instead of providing an opportunity for judges to exercise their professional expertise, the existence of so many procedural errors reduces their role to that of a clerk who processes paperwork and sends it back to the agency. Much like what occurs on the front lines, interactions in the hearings are condensed into exchanges over paperwork and process rather than substance and need. In essence, hearings become indistinct from the bureaucracy, providing only temporary relief while failing to uncover and scrutinize the substantive conflicts underlying disputes.

Maintaining the distinction between the administrative and the judicial, a task that falls within a judge's authority and control, is essential in resolving disputes that are ripe for review. As this study's findings

9. Unlike judges in judicial courts, administrative law judges are supervised. Their decisions are issued in the name of the State Commissioner of Social Services and their supervisor. (A small number of judges issue decisions in their own names.) However, their determinations typically prevail because of the large volume of cases, the professional status of the judge, and the fact that a presiding judge assesses appellants' credibility through personal contact with the parties.

suggest, judges can take widely divergent paths in exercising their discretion, and these paths have different consequences. Judges with a bureaucratic approach break down the often-fragile wall separating the front lines from the hearing room, and that wall is required if hearings are to function properly. Instead of employing a different form of decision making, they parallel the bureaucracy by focusing on process and the rote application of rules.

Consistent with bureaucratic demands for standardization, judges who operate under a bureaucratic approach apply detailed procedural demands uniformly to all, obscuring or ignoring the capabilities and circumstances of individual clients. The Adams hearing provides a particularly striking example of this. Despite evidence of the appellant's impairment and eligibility for assistance, the judge chose to focus on the narrow question of whether an intellectually impaired appellant submitted requested documents on time, claiming he did not have the authority to assess whether her impairments compromised her ability to do so.

Similarly, judges who follow a bureaucratic approach adhere closely to the rigid and narrow standards that frontline workers employ to assess proof. In this hierarchy of proof, agency records nearly always trump appellants' offers of evidence. Also limited is the range of documents accepted as proof; such judges ask for nothing more or less than the same document required on the front lines. This restrictive view of evidence diminishes other defining features of judicial decision making: the ability to attend to the nuances of language and context, as well as the ability to draw from alternative sources in assessing the coherence and credibility of appellants' explanations.

In contrast, judges who adopt the adjudicator approach use their power and authority to individualize disputes and encourage competing versions. They replace the front line's often-mechanical checklist of documents with a wider range of documents and other types of proof. Their skepticism and scrutiny of agency records creates a space where alternative explanations can emerge. They are more willing than bureaucratic judges to consider the goals and purposes underlying the law and rules, as the judges in the Tyler and Morris hearings did when they cut through the red tape to consider one appellant's eligibility for an emergency utility grant and another's for day-care reimbursement.

This study's evidence can be viewed from a different perspective. One might contend that the bureaucratic judges also consider the goals and purposes underlying welfare reform. Under the 1996 law (110 Stat. 2105), welfare ceases to be an entitlement. These judges give meaning and effect to that provision as well as to the law's emphasis on personal responsibility and self-sufficiency. Adherence to the formalistic demands embedded in regulations and agency practices is characteristic of the legal model of decision making, but it can also be viewed as a way to

uphold the rule of law (Simon 1983). Arguably, the judge in the Jones case was doing just this when she identified the appellant's alleged failure to call the agency as the linchpin of the case. This perspective suggests that the difference between the approaches of adjudicator and bureaucratic judges is not whether the purposes of the law are considered but which purposes take priority.

However, this study's examples, and particularly the Jones case, suggest that bureaucratic judges do not simply choose between conflicting goals; they eschew consideration of such goals if weighing them requires scrutinizing the agency's practices. In essence, such judges apply a double standard. For example, the judge in the Jones case scrutinized the appellant's behavior for evidence of personal responsibility (whether she contacted the agency) but did not examine agency practices that may discourage the exercise of responsibility (e.g., a poorly designed communication system that may render a recipient's exercise of personal responsibility futile). Of course, an assessment of both appellant actions and agency practices does not mandate a particular outcome; a judge could conclude that the appellant was at fault, or not. But it ensures that the law is applied in an evenhanded way to both the agency and appellants.[10] It also ensures the preservation of the law's underlying goals.

Common among the bureaucratic judges is the failure to exercise such evenhandedness by scrutinizing the agency's practices, as well as the appellants' actions. In this, they eviscerate the purpose and promise of hearings. The failure renders hearings ineffectual as a check against arbitrary agency action, including actions that may undermine the purposes of the law. Instead of making an independent assessment of what the rules require, bureaucratic judges substitute the agency's view of the rules. This view is often grounded in a form of excess proceduralism. Such actions hinder rather than advance the legal mode of decision making, which requires more than a rote and rigid application of the rules. Potential misapplications of the law remain uncorrected, and goal displacement, the particular plague of welfare bureaucracies (Brodkin 1986), remains unchecked.

Emphasis on due process and the way in which each individual case fits within the purposes of the law can, at times, clash with the efficient and uniform implementation of public policy. The emphasis slows implementation, stressing different values and concerns (Asimow 1999). However, this study suggests that the adjudicators compensate for and correct some of the deficiencies of administration on the front lines.

10. Judges differ over which goals to emphasize, especially in the context of a law that encourages help along with hassle (Mead 2003). But such differences are inevitably a part of any adjudicatory system, and judges often disagree over the interpretation of laws. Such disputes are often resolved through the appeals process, available here in the form of court review of fair-hearing decisions.

They do so by aligning themselves with the practices and procedures of the adversarial system. Far from impeding public policy, they advance it by replacing the often mechanized judgments of the front lines with an individualized approach that more closely aligns with the purposes of the law. Their close scrutiny enhances the possibility that hearing decisions will affect frontline practices.[11]

The adjudicator's individualized and assertive approach also sometimes lends itself to problem solving. In the Tyler and Morris hearings, the judges used their authority to pressure the agency to resolve the disputes. Arguably, such an approach reveals less a legal than a social work orientation; the judge intervenes in the dispute as a benevolent supervisor on the front lines might. Notably, however, judges in both cases worked within the confines of the law and the procedural demands of the bureaucracy. They did not alter the eligibility rules or the agency's demand for a specific document; in one case, the judge requested only that the appellant be given time to obtain the required document. In another, the judge asked the agency representative to confirm receipt of documents. He then suggested that the agency resolve the matter in the appellant's favor. In short, they asked but did not direct. They facilitated a solution to the dispute in ways not unfamiliar to judges in other legal settings. The solution allowed them to rectify the goal displacement and slippage that often occurs on the front lines. Adjudicator judges, including those who seek to resolve disputes rather than adjudicate them, maintain a distinction between a legal model of decision making and what William Simon (1983) refers to as the social work model. It involves a more flexible and individualized form of decision making than that found in the legal model, which is more directly guided by rules and regulations.

The existence of both adjudicator and bureaucratic approaches in the same system raises an obvious question: why the differences? Variations in style are of course inevitable, especially in positions that involve high levels of skill and discretion (Conley and O'Barr 1990), but the type of variation here is of particular interest; some judges are captured by the bureaucracy and others are not. Choosing an arguably surprising path that reduces their power and authority, bureaucratic judges deemphasize their skills and professional training. The form of rule following that they exhibit is usually less common among managers and elites than among workers with little power. A combination of hierarchy and status insecurity leads workers to rely heavily and mechanically on rules rather than exercising an individualized style of decision making (Mer-

11. Empirical evidence is lacking on whether hearing decisions can reform frontline practices, although research assumes that they do not (see Super 2005). One could imagine that such reforms might happen if the agency continually loses hearings because it schedules appellants' appointments at inconvenient times or fails to improve its communication systems.

ton 1940; Herzfeld 1993; Oberfield 2010). Moreover, unlike frontline workers, judges face little risk from exercising discretion in complex ways. Judges may use discretion without making interpretive judgments about appellants' moral worth (Maynard-Moody and Musheno 2003). The proper use of discretion involves following their professional training as well as the principles and practices that guide adversarial proceedings.

Many factors shape an individual's behavior within an organization (Saks and Ashforth 1997). Judges in this study received similar training and supervision. They operate in the same organizational environment under the same laws and regulatory structure. It is thus noteworthy that they follow different approaches. This suggests that several factors, not just organizational environment, influence the ways in which the judges choose to exercise their discretion. This study does not find that gender or ethnicity links to discernible patterns in the style of judging. Larger sample sizes and a different methodological approach are needed to determine the effects of such characteristics. Further research is also needed to identify other factors.

The bureaucratic approach to judging also serves as a cautionary tale. One view is that a more professionalized work force is the answer to what ails bureaucracies, and particularly welfare bureaucracies. Professional judgment and discretion, the argument goes, will produce reasonable and rational decisions that are closely aligned with the purposes of the law (Adler 2010; Kagan 2010). This study suggests, however, that the mere existence of professionals is insufficient to achieve such outcomes; even highly skilled professionals who hold positions of relative power within the bureaucratic hierarchy will choose not to exercise that power.

Note

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Nonprofit Human-Service Organizations, Social Rights, and Advocacy in a Neoliberal Welfare State

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The hallmark of the welfare state is the extension of social rights to the most vulnerable, a cause historically championed by nonprofit human-service organizations. With the rise of neoliberalism, these rights are threatened. This article attempts to show how the institutional, economic, and political environment of the nonprofit human-service sector is reshaped by a neoliberal ideology that celebrates market fundamentalism. The ideology institutionalizes such rules and practices as new public management, devolution, and privatization of services. Those elements shift the political discourse about the rights of the most vulnerable from the national to the local level. By turning vulnerable citizens into consumers, the ideology also reduces the national visibility of their needs. Most importantly, neoliberalism dampens the sector's motivation to challenge the state and greatly curtails its historical mission to advocate and mobilize for social rights.

The vast literature on the role of nonprofit human services in the American welfare state focuses mostly on the sector's relations with government, especially on relations that stem from the provision of publicly mandated services (e.g., Salamon 1995; Grønbjerg and Salamon 2002; Boris and Steuerle 2006). Less attention is given to a fundamental question about the role of the sector in advancing social rights, which lie at the core of the welfare state. As Elisabeth Clemens and Doug Guthrie (2010, 2) note, there is a lacuna in the study of the sector's role in electoral politics and policy formation. This article explores the non-

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profit sector's political role in advancing social rights and focuses particularly on the sector's ability to do so within the current neoliberal regime.[1] It shows that important sector actors successfully advocated for social rights in previous eras but that advocates encounter formidable barriers within the current political context. It also shows that the sector's capacity for advancing social rights is diminished at a time when social citizenship is increasingly threatened.

Nonprofit Human-Service Organizations and Social Rights

By advocating for social rights, nonprofit human-service organizations have played a key role in the formation and expansion of the American welfare state. Social rights, as defined by T. H. Marshall (1964, 72), are "the whole range from the right to a modicum of economic welfare and security to the right to share to the full in the social heritage and to live the life of a civilized being according to the standards prevailing in the society." The essential principles are that each citizen is entitled to an acceptable standard of living, that this standard is protected from market forces, and that it is guaranteed as a matter of right, not through some assessment of deservingness. As Margaret Somers (2008, 70) so aptly notes, the very idea of citizenship "is the *right to have rights*—the foundational public good for every person to be a member of a preexisting civil society and political community." Of course, social citizenship is an ideal whose actual implementation in the American welfare state has been contentious, fragile, and suffused with racial and gender biases (see, e.g., Quadagno 1990; Neubeck and Cazenave 2001). Its implementation also is driven to distinguish between the "deserving" and "undeserving" (Handler and Hasenfeld 1991, 37). Nonetheless, the idea that social citizenship is the moral justification for the welfare state is the underlying political theme employed by welfare state advocates in pushing government to accept responsibility for the care of its citizens (Handler 2004). Nonprofit human-service organizations pursued and affirmed social rights during the Progressive Era, advocated for the passage of Social Security during the Great Depression, and mobilized for political action during the civil and women's rights movements of the 1960s. To be sure, there have always been organizations that reject the advancement of social rights (Clemens 2010). Some in the sector viewed such rights as a threat to their autonomy and as a usurpation of their service mission. Examples include the Charity Organization Societies and the Red Cross. Nonetheless, the political context in these eras tended to favor the advocates.

1. In the current study, the contemporary term "nonprofit human-service organizations" is used to include what has been referred to in the literature as voluntary social service associations and charitable organizations. The term "civil society associations" here denotes all voluntary associations that exist in the public space between government and market.

Since the late 1970s, however, a neoliberal ideology has risen to dominance, altering the institutional, economic, and political landscape for nonprofit organizations. This cultural shift affects the regulation, finance, and provision of social services by public, nonprofit, and for-profit actors. It has led to a new politics of care played out through devolution and privatization of services. This study's key argument is that, amid such institutional transformations, social rights are doubly threatened: they are threatened by increasing dependence on the market behavior of nonprofit and for-profit human-service organizations; they also are threatened by declines in advocacy and mobilization by nonprofit human-service organizations, which have shifted away from social rights.

Nonprofit Human-Service Organizations and the Rise of Social Rights

Since the early days of the republic, nonprofit human-service organizations have played a pivotal role in creating organizational responses to human needs (McCarthy 2003). They foster private-public relations in funding and managing these services. They also promote social advocacy for the rights of women, children, and the poor (McCarthy 2003). Many were at the forefront in the struggles to abolish slavery, to oppose President Andrew Jackson's Indian removal bill (4 Stat. 411 [1830]), to outlaw prostitution, and to protest poor working conditions for women (McCarthy 2003, 98–191). To be sure, these organizations also expressed prevailing racial and religious prejudices. Some charities, such as the New York Children's Aid Society, were openly contemptuous of the poor (McCarthy 2003, 174).

At the turn of the twentieth century, a dense landscape of nonprofit human-service organizations dotted cities. They ran orphanages, hospitals, reformatories, and mental hospitals. They offered assistance to the poor and responded to emerging social needs. These organizations developed innovative social services that became models for policy makers to emulate (Mohr and Guerra-Pearson 2010). Many of these agencies operated in close collaboration with local public welfare departments, becoming important partners to local government in the provision of social services.

Nonprofit human-service organizations and voluntary social service associations were particularly visible and instrumental in influencing social policy during three pivotal periods: the Progressive Era, the Great Depression, and the 1960s. In the Progressive Era, coalitions of women's associations organized into federations with local branches. They acted as powerful advocates for a broad array of social policies to protect mothers and children. From their advocacy came minimum wages for working mothers and the mothers' pension (Skocpol 1992). Various

social reformers coalesced into a "child saving" movement that scored important achievements in public education, juvenile justice, and public health (Katz 1986, 130).

A distinctive feature of many of these associations is that they combined legislative advocacy with services to their constituents. The Young Women's Christian Association, the General Federation of Women's Clubs, and the settlement house movement provide poignant examples. Located mostly in poor urban areas populated by recent immigrants, the settlement house movement flourished during the Progressive Era, providing such basic services as education, health clinics, day care, and safe playgrounds for children (Fabricant and Fisher 2002, 29). Settlement workers argued that the causes of poverty are structural; that services to the poor must be based on collaborative relations between community residents and the workers; that residents should work together to improve social conditions, thereby learning and exercising their citizenship rights; and that social action is the key to combating economic, political, and social inequalities (Fabricant and Fisher 2002). At the local level, settlement workers fought for urban reform as well as for improvements to public education and facilities; at the state level, "they battled for statewide tenement house reform, child labor laws, . . . and women's suffrage" (Katz 1986, 161). Jane Addams, Florence Kelly, and other leaders of the settlement house movement were at the forefront in establishing juvenile courts, supporting mothers' pension legislation, and founding the federal Children's Bureau (Skocpol 1992, 350).

Although settlement houses and other Progressive Era associations advocated for social rights, it is important to note that their advocacy was partial and contingent. For example, the settlement houses remained mostly inaccessible to racial minorities. They assumed a paternalistic orientation toward the immigrants they served and sometimes imposed middle-class culture and values on the working class (Carson 1990, 197). During the 1920s, the movement became increasingly professionalized and imbued with a social casework approach. It also faced an increasingly inhospitable political climate. Because of these developments, "many settlements toned down their advocacy of reform" (Carson 1990, 180).

Not all Progressive Era charitable organizations supported social rights, and some dominant nonprofit human-service organizations voiced opposition. The Charity Organization Societies opposed the mothers' pension partly because it threatened their charitable hegemony and clashed with their notions of "scientific philanthropy" (Lubove 1968, 40; Leff 1973, 339). Similarly, agencies providing institutional care for children in New York tended to oppose the mothers' pension for fear that it would empty their institutions (Fitzgerald 2006, 175–80).

A vigorous mobilization to demand social rights took place during

the Great Depression. It was propelled, in part, by the massive lines of ordinary people at the relief offices. The breadth of need shattered the typical stereotypes of the pauper and the undeserving poor (Piven and Cloward 1977). Public and private social welfare agencies were ill equipped to provide relief at such a scale. Many private agencies were not capable of responding and simply dissolved (Katz 1986, 213–14). To bear witness to the scope of unemployment and to influence federal legislation, the settlement houses and other agencies began to gather data. Through their professional associations, social workers argued that the federal government bears responsibility for public assistance. They monitored and critiqued the implementation of the federal relief programs, protesting when Franklin Roosevelt's administration planned to quit the relief business.

Throughout the country, the unemployed mobilized themselves in councils, protesting their condition (often violently). Joined by the mass mobilization and organization of the industrial workers, they pushed for expansion of federal relief efforts and for unemployment insurance (Piven and Cloward 1977). The Congress of Unemployment and Social Insurance is one of several coalitions formed by trade unions, church groups, women's associations, civic associations, and newly organized "rank-and-file" social workers to advocate on behalf of the unemployed (Fisher 1980, 91). The powerful pension movement (e.g., the American Association for Old Age Security and the Townsend movement), which rose during the Depression, was a major force in pushing Congress to pass the Old Age Assistance program and the Social Security Act of 1935 (49 Stat. 620; Amenta, Caren, and Olasky 2005). Equally important was a network of women advocates. This "second generation of Progressive reformers" was instrumental in convincing legislators to include the Aid to Dependent Children program in the final Social Security legislation (Katz 1986, 222). They also played an important role in child labor prohibitions enacted as part of the Fair Labor Standards Act (52 Stat. 1060 [1938]; Katz 1986, 222).

Support for Aid to Dependent Children was not universal. Catholic Charities objected, for example, to the Federal Emergency Relief Administration's proposal to extend the definition of a "fatherless" child (Brown and McKeown 1997, 173). The expanded definition would identify children as fatherless if they were under the age of 16 and lived in a household where there was no adult "able to work" (i.e., unemployed; Brown and McKeown 1997, 173). Catholic child-caring institutions feared that many children would be moved to families in which they would be supported by the Aid to Dependent Children program.

Clemens (2010, 105–9) shows that the Roosevelt administration's commitment to extend social rights was tempered by its reluctance to undermine private charity. A compromise was worked out between the federal government and nonprofit human services. The nonprofit sector

cast itself in a new role, innovating and experimenting with programs that might then influence social policy.

Often forgotten is the eloquent endorsement of social rights in Franklin D. Roosevelt's State of the Union Address on January 11, 1944. Engaged in the war effort and facing the implications of the return of soldiers at the war's end, Roosevelt proposed a second bill of rights:

> We have come to a clear realization of the fact that true individual freedom cannot exist without economic security and independence. . . . We have accepted, so to speak, a second Bill of Rights under which a new basis of security and prosperity can be established for all—regardless of station, race, or creed. Among these are: The right to a useful and remunerative job in the industries or shops or farms or mines of the nation; The right to earn enough to provide adequate food and clothing and recreation; The right of every farmer to raise and sell his products at a return which will give him and his family a decent living; The right of every businessman, large and small, to trade in an atmosphere of freedom from unfair competition and domination by monopolies at home or abroad; The right of every family to a decent home; The right to adequate medical care and the opportunity to achieve and enjoy good health; The right to adequate protection from the economic fears of old age, sickness, accident, and unemployment; The right to a good education. (Roosevelt 1944, 41)

Although never enacted into law, Roosevelt's second bill of rights laid the groundwork for subsequent struggles for political and social rights in the civil rights and the women's rights movements of the 1960s (Sunstein 2004). Ensuing movements led to considerable expansion of the welfare state. Medicare, Medicaid, Supplemental Security Income, and the Food Stamp Program all stem from these movements. Often forgotten is the important role played by the Community Action Centers, most of which were incorporated as private nonprofit organizations. They combined the delivery of social services with political mobilization of low-income residents. As Noel Cazenave recounts (2007), the federal government sponsored the Community Action Program (CAP) to mobilize residents in poor neighborhoods who were disfranchised from local political institutions and the public and private social welfare services in their communities. The program was most effective in mobilizing African Americans. Indeed, Kenneth Andrews (2001) shows how civil rights movements in Mississippi counties were influential in securing increases in funding for CAPs, such as the Child Development Group of Mississippi. Despite the political backlash and the program's ultimate takeover by local political establishments, CAP succeeded in launching the movement for community control of schools. Through that movement, parents in poor neighborhoods organized to demand improvements in the education for their children and reforms in urban government. Those changes allow residents in poor neighborhoods to participate actively in local school policy making (Cazenave 2007, 174–75). The movement also planted the seeds for the National Welfare

Rights Organization, which pushed for the expansion of public aid and encouraged welfare recipients to exert their rights (Cazenave 2007, 177–78).

The Rise of Neoliberalism

The American welfare state in the 1950s and 1960s is characterized by what David Harvey (2005, 11) terms "embedded liberalism." By this he means that "market processes and entrepreneurial and corporate activities were surrounded by a web of social and political constraints and a regulatory environment that sometimes restrained but in other instances led the way in economic and industrial strategy" (Harvey 2005, 11). Monica Prasad (2006) notes that US taxation, industrial, and welfare state policies pursued a fairly egalitarian strategy in this period. Between 1947 and 1968, family income inequality, as measured by the Gini coefficient, decreased by 7.5 percent (Jones and Weinberg 2000), and the highest marginal tax rate ranged from 70 percent to 92 percent. The nonprofit human-service sector operated in a policy environment that at least partially encouraged social equality and the expansion of social rights.

Much of that environment changed with the rise of neoliberalism. Its rise is epitomized by the administrations of President Ronald Reagan. According to Harvey (2005, 2), "Neoliberalism is in the first instance a theory of political economic practices that proposes that human well-being can best be advanced by liberating individual entrepreneurial freedoms and skills within an institutional framework characterized by strong private property rights, free markets, and free trade." Its moral underpinnings are individual liberty, competition, individual responsibility, and work ethic. As such, "the responsibility of the individual vis-á-vis society is to be able to find means of self-sustenance and not to be 'assisted' by society. . . . Social protection should not be redistributive and should be individualized in the sense that aid should be granted in exchange for something [work]" (Amable 2011, 22–23). In particular, neoliberalism recasts the role of the welfare state by shifting responsibility from state to market and from the collective to the individual (Taylor-Gooby 2004).

Neoliberalism also reflects the institutional logic of business management: new public management (NPM). In its idealized form, NPM embraces several themes, including reorganizing public organizations into product and cost centers, shifting toward competition within and among public organizations and the private sector, adopting corporate management strategies, seeking alternative and cost-efficient modes of service delivery, adopting "hands-on management," employing measurable standards of performance, and using explicit output measures (Hood 1995, 98). Steven Hays and Richard Kearney (1997) venture beyond this to identify principles of NPM: reducing the size of government,

adopting business models in government, devolving program administration to state and local governments, restructuring government to emphasize results over processes, and privatizing services.

Identifying the reasons for the rise of neoliberalism is beyond the scope of this study.[2] Rather, the authors wish to highlight how neoliberalism rejects the ideal of social rights, alters the environment in which nonprofit human services operate, and has negative consequences for their ability to advocate for social rights. According to Prasad (2006, 45), three major policies signify the institutionalization of neoliberalism. The first of these is the Economic Recovery Tax Act of 1981 (95 Stat. 172), which effected "the largest tax cut in American history" (Prasad 2006, 45). The second is the deregulation of business and especially the financial institutions. The third is the Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1981 (95 Stat. 357), which curtailed eligibility for Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) program benefits, prohibited AFDC recipients from seeking reimbursement for work-related expenses, and gave the states the ability to experiment with various welfare-to-work options. The act laid the groundwork for the ultimate passage of welfare reform in 1996 (see also 110 Stat. 2105). As Jacob Hacker and Paul Pierson (2010) note, the resulting policy environment contributed to an unprecedented rise in income inequality and to a concentration of wealth in the highest income strata. Nathan Kelly and Peter Enns (2010) show that public opinion increasingly supports a conservative ideology that is hostile to the expansion of social rights. This ideology further reinforces income inequality.

As a result of the institutionalization of neoliberalism, nonprofit human-service organizations must respond and adapt to changing government policies that emphasize contracting out, devolution, and privatization (Grønbjerg and Salamon 2002; DeVita and Twombly 2006; Smith 2006). Under a contract regime, they are subject to the logic of NPM, which forces them to shift from a value-driven calculus to one driven by efficiency (Frumkin and Andre-Clark 2000).

The New Economics of Care: Contracts, Vouchers, and Competition

The neoliberal policy environment, particularly devolution and privatization as they are exemplified in the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program, altered the economics of the care provided

2. Often mentioned are the stagflation and the decline in corporate profits in the 1970s. These developments led to the mobilization of business interest groups as well as to increases in the political power of the Republican Party and its alliance with the Christian right. They also led to the continuing decline of labor unions, the rise in prominence of neoliberal think tanks, and the proliferation of media generously funded by corporations (see, e.g., Harvey 2005; Hacker and Pierson 2010).

by nonprofit human-service organizations. This environment increases their already quite extensive dependence on government funding but subjects them to greater competition (Salamon 2003; Boris et al. 2010). Steven Smith (2010) notes that contracts for human services grew as a result of the shift toward block grants in the 1980s. He also ties this growth to state and local governments, which increasingly relied on Medicaid (and later TANF) as a source of funding for social services. Reductions in federal social-welfare spending (e.g., on social, employment, and training services, as well as on community development) also fueled the nonprofit sector's dependence on these funding sources between 1980 and 2004. Alan Abramson, Lester Salamon, and C. Eugene Steuerle (2006, 113) show that, "measured as share of GDP, in fact, federal spending in this area as of FY 2004 was only 57 percent as great as it was in FY 1980." State and local governments compensate for federal cuts by using Medicaid funds to finance child welfare, mental health, home health, and counseling; most of these services are delivered by private providers (Smith 2006).

The increasing use of contracts by state and local governments attracted many new organizations, both nonprofit and for-profit, to the field of human-service delivery. Peter Frumkin (2002) calculates that the number of nonprofit social service providers increased by 125 percent from 1977 to 1997, but the number of for-profit providers increased by 202 percent. In the same period, revenues increased 704 percent for nonprofits and 827 percent for for-profits. In family services, job training, child care, and residential care for the elderly, competition comes from other nonprofits as well as from for-profit organizations.

In addition, providers have been forced to adapt to a changing landscape of new funding allocation rules and patterns. This landscape features "government promoted policy tools designed to reduce costs, foster choice among clients, and develop competitive social service and contracting environments" (DeVita and Twombly 2006, 263). It is characterized by increasing reliance on consumer vouchers and fees for service (i.e., consumer-side subsidies) rather than direct grants and contracts (i.e., producer-side subsidies); the use of tax credits to promote new services (e.g., low-cost housing); reliance on managed care and third-party intermediaries; and increasing enforcement of performance-based contracts (Smith 2010). The cumulative effects of these policy instruments changed the organizational field and its rules of the game for nonprofit human services. The changes are manifest in the entry of for-profit organizations, growth in competition, and increases in exposure to market forces (Grønbjerg 2001). In addition to increasing the sector's dependence on various forms of government funding, these developments further blur the distinction between nonprofit and for-profit organizations (Frumkin and Andre-Clark 1999). The field is also experiencing considerable uncertainty as state and local governments

grapple with declining resources and the federal government attempts to slow growth in Medicaid expenditures (Smith 2006). Moreover, the field is becoming dominated by large organizations that are able to attract the greater share of government resources; medium- and small-sized organizations are losing ground (DeVita and Twombly 2006, 265–66; Boris et al. 2010).

The New Politics of Care: Devolution and Privatization

Devolution and privatization have also altered the politics of care. They represent an ideology that claims that the state and its bureaucracies would be more responsive to its citizens if entitled services were devolved to the local level and subjected to market principles. This ideology pursues those goals through competition among public agencies, entry of nonprofit and for-profit providers, and private sector entrepreneurship in the public sector (Suleiman 2003, 15).

Devolution

Devolution is justified as a way to strengthen local democracy by bringing government closer to its citizens. It is supposed to enable local authorities to tailor services to the particular needs of the local population. It also is intended to increase citizens' access to and control over local governments' bureaucracy. Although devolution confers considerable discretion to local authorities, these authorities often use it to embed their own moral values, ideologies, and interests in the structure and practices of the social services they control. Those positions may be at odds with the desires or needs of service recipients (Hasenfeld 2000; Brodkin 2007). For example, availability of and access to contraceptives and abortion vary markedly across so-called blue and red states. This variation reflects differing dominant ideologies about family values. Those local ideologies become embedded in local policies and services (Cahn and Carbone 2010), influencing the capability and willingness of local authorities to invest resources into local programs that provide care. The extent to which local services are responsive to the needs of local citizens, especially those who are poor and vulnerable, is influenced by the local political elite, local government bureaucracies and practices, and the efforts of various interest groups that see devolution as an opportunity or as a threat. Moreover, funding formulas, such as the number of welfare recipients removed from the rolls or placed in jobs, create powerful financial pressures. This also is true of the federal and state monitoring criteria associated with contracts. These incentives and constraints influence the local implementation of the program. In particular, local authorities have an incentive to limit benefits, reduce costs,

and shift some of the burden to the consumers (Fording, Soss, and Schram 2007).

John Donahue (1999) argues that devolution is associated with increases in economic inequality, and he ties this inequality to differential policy making at the local level. As local communities compete with each other to attract desirable constituents (e.g., business entrepreneurs) and repel undesirable constituents (e.g., poor immigrants), they will attempt to gain advantages by using policy-making discretion in such areas as taxation, labor, education, and antipoverty services. To the extent that devolution accentuates inequality, it reduces social solidarity and impedes political consensus. Devolution also hampers the capacity of civil society to create and sustain bridging associations rather than bonding associations (Putnam 2000).

Privatization

The logic of privatization is that "the state, like the private sector, provides services. It is, in this sense, a producer. The citizen pays for those services when he or she purchases a service from a provider. . . . The purchaser is entitled to the best deal, and it can only be obtained in nonmonopolistic, competitive conditions" (Suleiman 2003, 51). The logic of privatization claims that the introduction of market mechanisms, especially competition, will motivate private contractors to deliver services of higher quality than that possible from government sources and to deliver them as efficiently as possible. The results, proponents claim, are better services for clients and cost savings for government (Donahue 1989; Sclar 2000).

Despite shifting the responsibility for social care from the government to private providers, privatization rarely achieves the claims that proponents use to justify it. In particular, it does not improve the quality of care (Donahue 1989; Sclar 2000; Van Slyke 2003; Lamothe and Lamothe 2010). There is some evidence to suggest that competition may be negatively associated with quality of service (Schlesinger, Dorwart, and Pulice 1986; Milward and Provan 2000; Fernandez 2007). Indeed, because quality of care cannot be readily observed or measured, efficiency criteria enforced in a contract regime are likely to displace quality. There is also little evidence to suggest that privatization achieves cost savings (Van Slyke 2003).

A possible reason why privatization achieves no cost savings or quality improvement may be the ability of social care contractors to exploit the contracting environment. Measures of outcome are exceedingly difficult to define, and the government is highly dependent on information controlled by the service providers. Because clients are generally dependent and marginalized, they have limited capacity, if any, to judge and communicate their assessments of quality to government officials.

Moreover, government agencies in charge of accountability have limited capacity to enforce it (Van Slyke 2003). The complexity of the contracting environment requires more staff resources and expertise than downsized public agencies possess.

Indeed, as Brinton Milward and Keith Provan (2000, 359) point out, privatization creates a "hollow state" in which there is a fundamental shift from the perspective that citizens are principals and officials are agents to the view that officials are principals and private providers are agents. This shift is accompanied by a change in the way that public services are delivered: offerings formerly delivered by a public bureaucracy are now distributed through a network of private providers. In the "hollow state," government officials "are continually faced with problems that can lead to instability—negotiating, coordinating, monitoring, holding third-parties accountable, and writing and enforcing contracts—all for organizations that are relatively independent of the funder" (Milward and Provan 2000, 363).

The Erosion of Social Citizenship?

What happens to the concept of citizenship, and particularly to that of social citizenship, when public services are devolved and privatized? Under devolution, which grants broad discretion to local authorities, the exercise of social rights, especially by the poor and the marginalized, becomes contingent on local political and bureaucratic practices. Rather than being an expression of universality, social rights become contingent on the exercise of local discretion. Local social services turn into arenas where competing interest groups fight over and negotiate contested moral assumptions about the poor. In particular, political elites use the administration of local services to advance their political aims. Because the poor are powerless, their voices are unlikely to be heard. Thus, the increased politicization of social care subjects the well-being of the poor to the vagaries of the local political landscape. For example, Richard Fording and colleagues (2007) study the use of TANF sanctions by counties in Florida, finding that rates of sanction are higher in more politically conservative counties and in those with a higher poverty rate.

Under privatization, citizens become customers. This shift has several consequences for social rights. First, the reconstruction of the citizen as a customer shifts the onus for securing needed services from the state to the individual, obscuring the reciprocal responsibility of citizen and state; that reciprocal relationship is the basis of social rights. Citizenship creates a community of interest that is essential to sustain democracy. As Ezra Suleiman (2003, 52) argues, "To be a customer requires no commitments and a responsibility only to oneself. To be a citizen requires a commitment and responsibility that goes beyond the self." Somers (2008, 69) differentiates between contract and citizenship, stating

that "contracts are the life-blood of markets—quid pro quo instruments of voluntary commercial exchange between equivalent goods, services or monies. Citizenship, in contrast, is the life-blood of social solidarity in civil society and political communities comprised of non-contractual membership rights, relationships, and reciprocal responsibilities."

Neoliberalism, with its logic of market fundamentalism, transforms "the rights and obligations of citizenship from an ethic (if not always the reality) of non-contractual reciprocities based on the rights and responsibilities of equal inclusion, into one in which the right of social inclusion is conditional on being party to a market exchange of equivalent value" (Somers 2008, 72). Thus, citizen empowerment is framed in terms of choice within the market economy, and failure to obtain needed services is no longer the fault of the state but rather the failure of the individual to transact effectively in the market. Especially in the case of consumer vouchers, citizens are expected to express their dissatisfaction through exit rather than voice (Hirschman 1970). Those with personal resources are more likely to exit than to remain, leaving behind the highly marginalized, who are least likely to voice their protest. Consequently, vulnerable citizens are not only unlikely to see improvement in the quality of services but may even witness further deterioration. As Somers (2008, 89) puts it, "People who have nothing to offer or exchange in the way of useful labor or personal assets—the poor, the very young, the infirm, the severely disabled—have no rights because they have no worth; they become rightless and excluded."

Second, privatization creates an infrastructure of private organizations that mediate the citizen's relationship with the state. As a result, social rights become dependent on the market behavior of private service providers. Citizens find it difficult to exercise their rights because these are channeled through nonprofit and for-profit organizations that act as agents of government; social rights are contingent on citizens' desirability as consumers. Their needs and services are subject to a calculus of efficiency and profitability. In their study of case managers employed by private providers of welfare-to-work services, Sanford Schram and colleagues (2010, 747) find that "market pressures imposed on implementing organizations rain down on the case manager from above, and it is the case manager who, in turn, must work to secure market compliance from the client." Workers in these organizations use their discretion to determine eligibility for entitled services and to discriminate between desirable and undesirable clients (Alexander 1999). Desirable clients add to the profitability of the organization; processing and treating them requires fewer resources, and they score well on the outcome measures set by government (Forder 1997).

Third, under privatization, citizens' awareness of the relationship between the benefits they receive and the state's obligation to provide them is obscured by their more direct interactions with the intervening

private sector. Because they are so distanced from public officials, they have limited awareness of who is responsible for services. If dissatisfied with services, they are likely to misidentify the nonprofit provider as a government agency (Van Slyke and Roch 2004) and, thus, are not likely to comprehend the chain of accountability that runs from the state via the nonprofits to them.

The Paradox of Advocacy and Mobilization

When social rights are threatened, the role of civil society associations to advocate for them, especially at the national level, becomes particularly critical. Paradoxically, all indications suggest that these associations meet current threats with a muted response. Despite the rapid increase in the number of nonprofit organizations and civic associations since the 1980s, the new economics and politics of care have in fact compromised the capacity and effectiveness of civil associations and nonprofit organizations to advocate and mobilize for the social rights of marginalized populations. At the same time, a new rhetoric promotes bottom-up policy making and the empowerment of citizenry.

As noted earlier, a robust growth in the nonprofit human-services sector in recent decades outpaced the growth of the overall economy. From 1995 to 2012, the number of registered nonprofit human-service organizations increased by 33 percent and their total revenues (in constant dollars) increased by 73 percent (Urban Institute 2012); the US gross domestic product increased by 46 percent from 1995 to 2011 (Bureau of Economic Analysis 2012).[3]

Despite the sector's growth in size and resources, most of these organizations' policy advocacy efforts are marginal, limited, and narrowly focused. In a recent national study of advocacy by nonprofit organizations, Gary Bass and associates (2007) find that 75 percent of organizations claim to have engaged in political activity at least once but that the frequency of such activity is extremely low. As Bass and associates (2007, 29) note, "Seventy percent [of the respondents] said they either never lobby or do so infrequently. In fact, three out of five nonprofits that say they [lobby] do so at a low level." In a survey of nonprofit organizations in Indiana, Curtis Child and Kirsten Grønbjerg (2007) find that about 23 percent of all organizations engage in some kind of advocacy and most devote limited (if any) resources to it. Only 7 percent of the organizations devote substantial resources to what the authors define as "core advocacy" (Child and Grønbjerg 2007, 268). A majority of human-service organizations indicate that they are unlikely to engage in any advocacy and rarely engage in core advocacy. Interestingly, the

3. It is possible that part of the growth may be due to increasing registration by organizations normally exempt from filing (e.g., religious organizations).

study finds that substantial reliance on government funding reduces the odds of engaging in core advocacy.

In a study of lobbying efforts by citizen groups, Jeffrey Berry (1999) finds that the agendas of these groups have shifted since the 1960s; once motivated by material concerns and issues of economic equality, the groups now focus on culture, environment, morality, lifestyle issues, and individual rights issues. Frank Baumgartner and colleagues (2009) reach a similar conclusion. In their study of a random sample of policy issues in two periods (1999–2000 and 2001–2), they find that liberal groups gave little attention to the issue of poverty and the plight of low-income families. Such groups were more interested in environmental issues than efforts to "expand benefits to the unemployed, raise the minimum wage, improve social or educational services in disadvantaged neighborhoods, or promote other issues where one could easily argue that substantial social needs exist" (Baumgartner 2009, 256). Thus, organized lobbying efforts on behalf of social rights were very limited. Theda Skocpol (2003, 240–44) also concludes that advocacy and support for inclusive social provision declined substantially. She identifies economic equality issues that constituted 13.5 percent of the legislative agenda in 1963: increases in wages, benefits, or pensions; expansion of job training; improvement of working conditions; provision of income maintenance; and provision of basic health coverage. Skocpol then notes that the share of the legislative agenda devoted to these issues was 9.5 percent lower in 1991.

Why do advocacy efforts to extend social rights at the national level decline even as the nonprofit sector grows? Skocpol (2003) argues that the rights revolution of the 1960s caused the proliferation of professionalized advocacy and nonprofit organizations. These organizations focus on the narrow instrumental interests of the particular constituency they represent. There is greater reliance on litigation, advocacy for personal rather than social rights, and lobbying for legislation or regulation targeted to benefit a particular group, which tends to be economically privileged. Skocpol (2003, 224) writes: "Because today's advocacy groups are staff-heavy and focused on lobbying, research, and media projects, they are managed from the top, even when they claim to speak for ordinary people." Consequently, they are more likely to represent elite groups rather than cross-class members. These advocacy groups are structurally centralized and staff-driven; Skocpol observes that they do not encourage active participation by their dues-paying members and are no longer organized as federated associations in which local chapters are mobilized for political action at the national level.

The current study's focus on human services leads the authors to offer an explanation that differs from Skocpol's but complements it. This explanation emphasizes neoliberalism's chilling effects on advocacy, especially the effects of devolution and privatization. First, because devolution shifts the onus of service responsibility from the national to

the local level, social problems and needed services become framed as local issues requiring local solutions. Thus, the national visibility of such problems is diminished. This makes it difficult for civic associations to coalesce around a common, national-level frame and strategy. In the case of welfare reform, for example, national-level mobilization on behalf of the poor is exceedingly difficult because the 1996 welfare law grants broad discretion to the states; because of this discretion, there is great variation in the policies and programs offered across states and localities.

Second, privatization reduces opportunities for mobilization by disbanding political interests. It does so by shifting the state's responsibility for the quality of services, and for the policy itself, to the private sector. Privatization places this responsibility on the shoulders of consumers, who are expected to make choices consistent with their preferences. Policy ends are defined by the aggregation of self-interested choices. Voucher holders, for example, are unable to share collective experiences that could plant the seeds of collective action (Crenson and Ginsberg 2002).

Third, as Matthew Crenson and Benjamin Ginsberg (2002) argue, decentralized and privatized policies enable nonprofit organizations to achieve their goals by securing contracts with government rather than by mobilizing grassroots support. Extensive pursuit of governmental contracts for services modifies the types of advocacy nonprofit organizations engage in. In particular, pursuit of governmental contracts increases the likelihood that nonprofits engage public officials in order to obtain additional resources for their clients, and it diminishes the likelihood that they will pursue social needs or initiate services they perceive to have a low probability of receiving funding (Frumkin and Andre-Clark 2000; Eikenberry and Kluver 2004). Organizations bound to government by contracts seldom engage in challenging tactics (Mosley 2006). In their national study of advocacy by nonprofit organizations, Bass and associates (2007, 31) find that "three out of four respondents said that receipt of government funds serves as some barrier to engaging in policy matters." As one executive put it, "It's very hard to be an advocate when you're dependent upon state money" (33). Such an accommodating form of advocacy promotes the view that nonprofit organizations are interest groups that lobby on behalf of their own self-interest rather than on behalf of the public interest. It is quite telling that the settlement houses abandoned much of their social action mission when they became multiservice agencies under contract with government. Their primary political agenda now is to protect their programs, often by mobilizing their clients to connect with local politicians in order to secure their resources (Fabricant and Fisher 2002, 207–14; Marwell 2004).

Fourth, as nonprofit organizations become the major service provid-

ers, they also undermine the legitimacy and responsibility of the state to provide public services (Clemens 2006, 208). That is, devolution and privatization reinforce an antistate ideology by advancing a perversity thesis that government is the problem rather than the solution (Hirschman 1991). By becoming major service providers, nonprofit organizations alter the relationship between civil society and government, possibly co-opting civil society to serve the political and ideological needs of the political elites.

The nonprofit sector faces a chilling political atmosphere brought on by the advent of neoliberalism. As Clemens suggests (2006, 214), "Through their tax-exempt status and receipt of public funds, both advocacy and service organizations remain vulnerable to political efforts to use the leverage of these economic advantages to channel or choke off political activity." In an attempt to muzzle advocacy by nonprofit organizations, the Reagan administration's Office of Management and Budget issued Circular A-122 (48 C.F.R. 31.701 [1984]). The aim, as the conservatives stated, was to "defund the left" (Berry 1993, 34). It proposed that "no federal funds could pay the allowable costs of any staff, equipment, or facility involved in the slightest amount of political advocacy, even if the advocacy costs were paid with non-federal funds" (Bass et al. 2007, 84). Although not enacted, the "Circular A-122 proposal continues to be the backbone of conservative plans to silence the advocacy voice of nonprofits—and it has contributed enormously to the chill in nonprofit advocacy today" (Bass et al. 2007, 88). Subsequent legislative attempts, including the Istook amendment (Title V, H.R. 2127, 104th Cong. [1995]), would have broadened considerably the prohibition against advocacy by nonprofits receiving federal funds. Clearly these unsuccessful attempts created a climate of fear and a deterrence among nonprofits that might otherwise be inclined to engage in advocacy.

As noted above, when advocacy does occur, it is constrained by devolution and privatization to concentrate on local issues. In her study of three national Progressive movement networks, the Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now (ACORN), the Pacific Institute for Community Organization (PICO) Network, and the Gamaliel Foundation, Heidi Swarts (2008) shows that many of their advocacy efforts and successes occur at the local and state levels. For example, ACORN helped push living-wage ordinances in 16 cities, advocated to raise the minimum wage in New York, joined coalitions in several cities to advance charter schools, participated in a coalition to prevent national legislation that would preempt state and local laws against predatory lending, and mobilized for voter registration. The PICO network helped to place a cigarette tax initiative on the ballot in California. The initiative would use those tax revenues to fund children's health insurance. The network also worked in several cities across the country to

obtain additional funding for education and affordable housing. Although these and other policy initiatives are noteworthy accomplishments, the benefits they provide are available only to poor residents in select localities.

Such networks are less successful in efforts to advance legislation that promotes social rights at the national level. Swarts (2008, 183) recognizes the dilemma facing networks such as PICO: "What began as a pragmatic strategy to mobilize the hopeless and quiescent—choosing issues that are 'immediate, specific, and winnable'—discouraged organizers from thinking beyond the local level." Unevenly scattered victories at the local level break up collectivities at the national level because some constituents enjoy the benefits of local advocacy efforts. These local successes reduce their motivation to join forces in advocating for social rights at the national level.

Indeed, policy advocacy in a devolved and privatized welfare regime is likely to be displaced by what Nicole Marwell (2004, 286) terms a "new version of machine politics." In her field study of community-based organizations, Marwell finds that some of these organizations obtain and secure government contracts by engaging in mobilization tactics to ensure that their local constituencies vote for local politicians who will, in turn, favor the groups in awarding contracts and grants. If successful, these tactics can increase the number and size of government contracts to the organizations and their local community. Yet, as Marwell (2004, 285) notes, these local "electoral efforts are limited to influencing contract allocation decisions; the organization has minimal interest in creating policy change." Indeed, the new machine politics creates a zero-sum game: local communities that are richer in political capital gain a greater share of the limited resources for human services, and allocations to these communities come at the expense of those communities that are poorer in political capital. These politically driven allocations undermine the very essence of social right. Similarly, Eve Garrow (2011) finds that organizations engaged in advocacy are more likely to obtain government funding than are those that do not engage in advocacy, and those located in high-poverty areas are not likely to obtain more government funding than organizations located in low-poverty areas. This finding suggests that allocation of government resources is influenced by the amount of political capital organizations have rather than by a norm of social rights.

There is evidence that the current decline in national-level policy advocacy by nonprofit organizations and civic associations has a profound effect on the extent to which social rights are extended and institutionalized. Brayden King, Keith Bentele, and Sarah Soule (2007, 149) find that the extent of congressional attention to rights issues is related to the amount of advocacy done on behalf of those issues; Congress is more likely to hold hearings on rights issues around which there

are more than an average number of protests in the same year. The researchers also find that the perceived legitimacy of a rights issue grows in Congress over time with the cumulative number of congressional hearings held on that issue. Therefore, new rights issues are more likely to gain receptive congressional actors in subsequent sessions than in the session during which they are first raised (King et al. 2007, 152). Yet, the number of congressional hearings on social welfare issues (e.g., food assistance; poverty; assistance to low-income families, the elderly, and the disabled; social services) suggests that there has been a precipitous decline in congressional attention to social welfare policy since the 1980s (Baumgartner and Leach 2001). Figure 1 shows that the number of hearings on social welfare generally rose from 1960 to 1977. That was also a period of active advocacy for social rights. Since then, however, the number of hearings declined almost steadily.

Figure 1 also suggests that the current decline in advocacy limits the effectiveness of nonprofit and civic associations in bringing media attention to the issue of social rights. The figure shows the number of articles on social welfare in the *New York Times* from 1960 to 2007, and parts of the trend in published articles parallel parts of the trend in congressional hearings on social welfare issues. The number of articles on social welfare increased steadily from 1964 to 1975 but declined by nearly half from 1975 to 2005 (the welfare reform debates in 1995 provide a brief exception in the trends). In their seminal paper, William Gamson and Gadi Wolfsfeld (1993) propose that the media is critical for effective advocacy because it helps in mobilizing supporters, validating the importance of an issue, and enlarging an issue's scope. Reviewing research on social movements and media attention, Kenneth Andrews and Neal Caren (2010, 845) conclude that "organizational resources increase media attention because resources signal newsworthiness and provide greater capacity to pursue coverage." In studying coverage of social movements by the *New York Times*, Edwin Amenta and associates (2009) conclude that media coverage increases when movements engage in disruptive activities, mobilize resources (i.e., other supportive organizations), and advocate in a favorable political regime for an enforced policy that favors their constituencies. The authors of the current study infer therefore that the obverse is also true: when there is a decline in media coverage, advocacy groups do not engage in protest activities, fail to mobilize sufficient resources, advocate to an unfavorable political regime, and face policies that disfavor their constituencies. These factors would indeed explain why advocacy groups have failed to draw media attention to social welfare since the 1980s.

Finally, the dampening of advocacy activity by nonprofit organizations and civic associations, and the resulting decline in congressional attention to social rights, may have created a feedback loop that further diminishes advocacy. In general, congressional attention to issues that

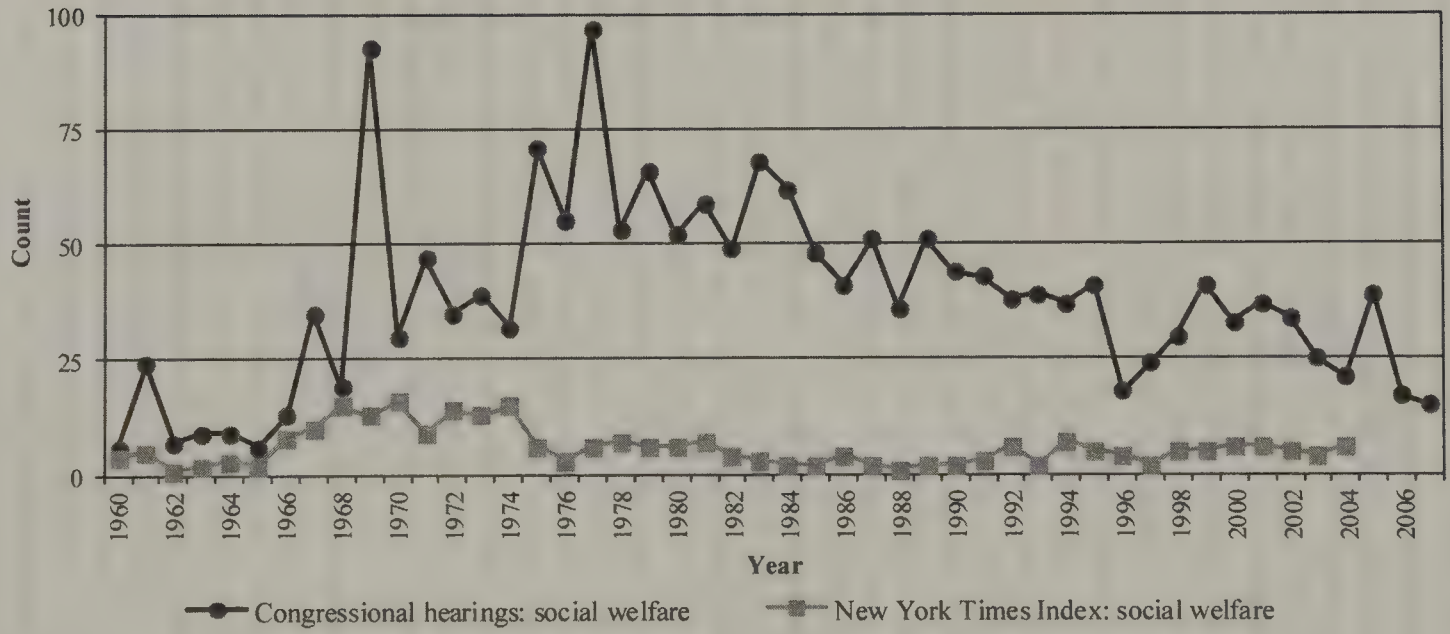


FIG. 1.—Congressional Hearings and *New York Times* Index on Social Welfare, 1960–2007. Source: Center for American Politics and Public Policy's Policy Agendas Project (http://www.policyagendas.org/). The data used here were originally collected by Frank R. Baumgartner and Bryan D. Jones, with the support of National Science Foundation (grants SBR 9320922 and 0111611), and were distributed through the Department of Government at the University of Texas at Austin. Neither the National Science Foundation nor the original collectors of the data bear any responsibility for the analysis reported here. Results from the *New York Times* Index represent a systematic random sample of articles published in the *Times* between 1960 and 2005. Results for congressional hearings represent the number of hearings held on social welfare issues during that period.

nonprofits care about is the engine that drives advocacy and lobbying at the national level (Leech et al. 2005; Baumgartner et al. 2009). That is, "As government attention to an issue-area increases, so too will lobbying in that issue-area" (Leech et al. 2005, 21). Conversely, when legislative attention to social welfare issues declines, advocacy on behalf of these issues is also expected to decline. If that is so, the current decline in advocacy can be attributed in part to the failure of advocacy groups to make social rights a national issue, through the media or otherwise, as this failure decreases congressional attention to social rights. In turn, lack of congressional attention makes it difficult to bring up new social rights issues.

Is Policy Advocacy for Social Rights Possible in a Neoliberal Regime?

This article argues that the rise of a neoliberal ideology, as manifested by devolution and privatization, curtailed the nonprofit sector's historical mission to advocate for and mobilize on behalf of social rights. The authors also theorize about the political opportunities that may enable policy advocacy even in the context of a neoliberal regime. The discussion distinguishes between institutionalized and emerging policy fields to show that the latter can create a political opportunity for advocacy to advance social rights (Kriesi 2008).

In an institutionalized policy field, and in the correspondent organizational field (such as welfare), the political struggles between neoliberal and social rights logics are settled. The dominant neoliberal policy logic and narrative come to define the moral categorization of the target population, its problems, the desired outcomes, and the modes of intervention (Schneider and Ingram 1993; Steensland 2010). The corresponding organizational field embodies the logic in its institutional rules and practices. The opportunities for advocacy become constrained not only by the policy itself but also by the bureaucracy that implements it and by the isomorphic pressures of the human-services organizational field that depends on it.

In contrast, when a new social problem is discovered in an emerging field (e.g., homelessness or HIV/AIDS during the 1980s), power positions are not consolidated; the social policies and public bureaucracies that define the nature of the problem and the array of possible solutions may not exist. The human-service organizations that arise in response to the problem have a political opportunity to frame it in moral terms that can advance social rights. The organizations are not constrained by dependence on existing policy, government funding, or legitimacy, and they are not bound by the isomorphic pressures of an established organizational field (Cress and Snow 2000).

Such an opportunity is exemplified in struggles during the 1980s to achieve social rights for homeless persons. The struggle culminated in the passage of the McKinney Act (101 Stat. 482 [1987]) when the neoliberal regime became dominant. As Daniel Cress and David Snow (2000, 1073) point out, "The vast majority of homeless collective actions—such as protest rallies and marches, housing takeovers, and encampments on government property—were local in organization and focus." Still, local advocates were also able to mobilize and coalesce nationally. Perusal of congressional hearings leading to the McKinney Act shows that a majority of the witnesses who advocated for the right to shelter represented organizations that provided human services for homeless. Examples of these organizations include shelter operators, coalitions for the mentally ill, the Women's Housing Coalition, Catholic Charities, the Council of Jewish Federations, and the Salvation Army. Gary Blasi (2000, 218) argues that the "new" homelessness enabled the National Coalition for the Homeless and other advocacy groups around the country to frame the cause of homelessness as a structural (e.g., lack of housing) rather than an individual deficiency. This allowed advocates to mobilize the media to echo such an explanation. The advocates also received help from public opinion surveys, which showed that homelessness was unlike welfare or poverty, in that a public majority blamed society for homelessness (Blasi 2000, 215–17). Moreover, Blasi (2000, 227–37) notes that public perceptions of the "homeless" were not racialized. Reluctantly signed by President Reagan, the McKinney Act failed to advance the right to shelter, but it did recognize homelessness as a national problem requiring federal response (Foscarinis 1996).

The passage of the Ryan White Comprehensive AIDS Resources Emergency Act of 1990 (104 Stat. 576) represents another example of mobilization to extend social rights in a neoliberal regime. In this case, advocates acted on behalf of persons with HIV/AIDS. With the AIDS epidemic, a policy field emerged in which advocates, politicians, the media, local and national government agencies, private and public medical research organizations, and newly formed AIDS service organizations engaged in a political struggle to define the nature and effect of the epidemic as well as the policy responses to it (Epstein 1996; Levitt and Rosenthal 1999).

Early in the epidemic, gay and lesbian activists formed a network of local AIDS service organizations. This network developed in response to state and municipal reluctance to provide needed services and in response to the hostility with which governments met requests for those services (Levitt and Rosenthal 1999, 785). Accompanying the network's rise were the emergence and mobilization of the "AIDS movement," which Steven Epstein (1996, 8) describes as "broad based and diverse, ranging from grassroots activists and advocacy organizations to health educators, journalists, writers, and service providers; it cuts across the

various communities and constituencies affected by the AIDS epidemic." The movement's membership enhanced its powerful political mobilization and fundraising capabilities; many of its members were middle- and upper-income whites with considerable "cultural capital" (Epstein 1996, 12).

Moreover, the framing of the target population shifted by the mid-1980s; the stereotype that AIDS affects gay men and injection drug users broadened to include hemophiliacs perceived as "innocent victims" (Donovan 1993, 11). This shift is epitomized by the story of Ryan White, a hemophiliac boy who became infected with HIV and was shunned from school. As Mark Donovan notes (1993, 13), "This shift in public consciousness provided an opportunity for policymakers to construct AIDS policy which could deliver benefits to 'deserving' target populations." It gave politicians the legitimacy and political cover to pass the 1990 act, which provides emergency relief grants to states and cities. The grants fund health and support services to HIV-positive individuals as well as early intervention services for persons who contract or are at risk to contract HIV.

The administration of both the McKinney and Ryan White acts is still markedly constrained by the neoliberal emphasis on devolution. Local authorities have considerable discretion in how to use and allocate the grants. As a result, the benefits provided through the acts cannot be viewed as entitlements because they are subject to the political vagaries of the federal budget. Rather, the acts set up a complex system of funding criteria; under that system, different programs serve various target groups and are administered by a broad array of providers that range from state governments to nonprofit organizations (Siplon 1999, 799). Although the acts recognize and support funding to meet some of the needs of vulnerable populations (in this case, the homeless and persons with HIV/AIDS), their administration sets considerable barriers to the exercise of social rights.

Conclusion

Human-service associations have played an important role in advocating for the expansion of the welfare state and in the institutionalization of social rights. However, this historical role is challenged under neoliberalism and the resulting new economics and politics of social care. Devolution and privatization, including contracting out, are powerful forces that erode social citizenship and threaten the autonomy of civil society as a mobilizing force that advocates on behalf of the poor and the marginalized. Under the new economics and politics of care, human-service organizations conceptualize their clients as customers rather than as citizens. As a result, the organizations obscure the importance of the state in protecting their social rights. Neoliberalism evokes the

image of local empowerment in rationalizing devolution and privatization. In reality, neoliberalism disempowers the poor and the vulnerable by turning them into consumers rather than citizens, a shift that can deprive them of their already precarious social rights.

Operating within a political economy of contracts, privatization, and marketization chills nonprofit human-service organizations' interest in and ability to engage in policy advocacy. It also limits their ability to mobilize for expansion of social rights. Advocacy, when it does occur, typically centers on obtaining benefits and resources for local constituencies. Only when new social problems arise and are coupled with an emerging policy field is there an opportunity to advocate on the national level.

In the final analysis, the ability of civil society to advocate on behalf of poor and vulnerable populations hinges on two factors: the extent to which the public sphere is independent of government and the extent to which civil society is protected from market forces. These conditions do not prevail in a neoliberal welfare regime.

Note

Yeheskel Hasenfeld is distinguished professor of social welfare at the University of California, Los Angeles, Luskin School of Public Affairs. He has published extensively on the attributes of human-service organizations and, with Joel Handler, on poverty and welfare reform. Currently, he is studying the role of nonprofit organizations, including social enterprises, in the provision of social services. His most recent edited volume, with Benjamin Gidron, is *Social Enterprises: An Organizational Perspective* (New York: Palgrave, 2012). **Eve E. Garrow** is an assistant professor at the University of Michigan School of Social Work. Her research seeks to understand how human-service organizations respond to, manage, and influence social policy and diverse and contradictory demands from their environments. She examines the consequences for policy implementation, human-service delivery, and client outcomes. The authors thank Mayer Zald for his encouragement and thoughtful suggestions, and the anonymous reviewers for their insightful comments on earlier drafts.

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Leveraging Privilege: Organizing Young People with Wealth to Support Social Justice

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Scholars and practitioners suggest that some people with power and privilege organize within their own communities to create change and help shape a just society. However, extant literature offers no model of how those with privilege organize to support these goals while remaining accountable to cross-class movements and avoiding replication of existing, unjust power structures. This mixed-methods case study examines how an organization of young adults who have (or will inherit) wealth alters a transformative model to effectively organize people with wealth. The article extends the literature on community organizing by proposing a model for organizing people with wealth and privileged identities to responsibly leverage their resources and access to elite institutions. Working with these young adults, a cross-class team of organizers uses its collective knowledge and experience to develop critical consciousness, build skills, and create action plans that responsibly support social justice.

Community organizers and scholars historically have focused on organizing those who are disenfranchised to address economic, racial, and social injustices (Alinsky 1971; Fisher 1994; Mondros and Wilson 1994; Gutiérrez et al. 1996; Bobo, Kendall, and Max 2001; Rothman, Erlich, and Tropman 2001; Sen 2003; Smock 2004; Pyles 2009). The primary role progressive people with wealth play in social justice movements is usually limited to providing financial support for grassroots efforts that organize to address the root causes of injustice.[1] This approach to social change is often described as social justice philanthropy (National Committee for Responsive Philanthropy 2003). However, most social justice

1. Some individuals also participate in these movements as activists, organizers, and journalists but hide their wealth, do not engage it, or do not fully leverage their access to resources and networks.

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philanthropists rarely go beyond check writing to directly address power, control, and decision-making inequities inherent in philanthropy, and most do not address wealth distribution (or redistribution). Indeed, few seek out responsible ways to leverage their access to institutions of power (Jenkins 1989, 1998; Ostrander 1995; Ostrower 1995; Skocpol 2003).

The role of people with wealth in supporting social justice is increasingly important, as wealth is controlled by fewer and fewer individuals. In the United States alone, nearly 50 percent of the wealth is held by the wealthiest 1 percent of the population (Wolff and Twentieth Century Fund 2002; Davies et al. 2009; Norton and Ariely 2011). The wealthiest 1 percent of the population owns the same amount of wealth as the bottom 90 percent (Kennickell 2009; United for a Fair Economy 2009). The implications of this concentration extend beyond economics. Those with more wealth have greater access to elected representatives, corporate elites, and other decision makers (Skocpol 2003). Because those with wealth have control over many philanthropic dollars, they have great influence concerning which social justice efforts are funded through these foundations and how funding is distributed (Skocpol 2003). The wealth inequality, power imbalance, and control of philanthropic institutions are critical social justice issues that generations of movement activists and organizers have tried to address (Ostrander 1995; Incite! Women of Color Against Violence 2007).

Within the current economic, social, and philanthropic environment, a group of young adults with wealth is forging a new approach to community organizing to address some of these critical social justice issues of wealth, power, and philanthropic control. This approach bridges their resources with their social justice values in order to effectively support and strengthen social justice movements (Goldberg 2002; Pratt 2003).[2] This article examines that model and explicitly addresses how it can help communities of people with power increase their accountability to social justice movements.

Community Organizing Models

The literature examining traditional models and methods of community organizing among disenfranchised groups identifies methods for building a base, leadership, organizations, and movements. Saul Alinsky's (1971) widely known model emphasizes a utilitarian, practical, winnable, ends-oriented approach. It is grounded in constituent self-interest, centers on specific issues, and often focuses on short-term campaigns.

2. A handful of other contemporary organizations responsibly leverage their access to wealth as a way to support such progressive social causes as corporate responsibility and fair taxation. Examples include Responsible Wealth, a program within United for a Fair Economy, and Wealth for the Common Good.

Drawing on many relationship- and skill-building techniques in the Alinsky model, the transformative organizing (TO) approach has gained widespread popularity in recent years. Transformative organizing differs from the Alinsky model by using a means-oriented approach to achieve both short- and long-term ends (Bradshaw, Soifer, and Gutiérrez 1994; Pyles 2009; Social Justice Leadership 2010*b*). One important element of TO's means-oriented approach is its focus on building critical consciousness, which is defined as the ability to perceive oppression, power, and privilege in social, political, and economic forms, and to act against oppressive societal elements (Freire 1986; Crenshaw 1995; Reed et al. 1997; Gutiérrez, Parsons, and Cox 1998; Collins 2000). In this, TO draws substantially from intersectional approaches to feminism and popular education.

Furthermore, TO asserts that both individual and societal transformation are necessary, holding that this change must occur simultaneously in order to build powerful social justice movements that effect meaningful structural change (Bradshaw et al. 1994; Pyles 2009; Social Justice Leadership 2010*b*). The approach also asserts that these multiple levels of transformation must happen within the community groups that organize to create change (Moraga and Anzaldúa 1981; Lorde 1984; Freire 1986; Gutiérrez and Lewis 1998; Gutiérrez et al. 1998; Collins 2000; Smith 2006; Pyles 2009; Social Justice Leadership 2010*a*, 2010*b*). Moreover, the TO model recognizes that community organizing must address the intersections of all forms of injustice in order to build a movement that challenges the oppressions of all marginalized peoples.

Popular education, which is central to TO, is one way through which individuals develop critical consciousness. Popular education centers on learning from one another's lived experiences within institutions of domination (Freire 1986). Loretta Pyles (2009) explains that creating spaces where marginalized groups can discuss their lived experiences is an important process through which organizers can understand the concerns and strengths of a community. Through popular education, individuals and groups develop critical awareness of their position within a larger social, economic, and political context. As a result, they enhance their ability to act for change (Freire 1986; Reed et al. 1997; Middleton, Anderson, and Banning 2009). Drawing upon Paulo Freire, TO interweaves popular education with the concept of praxis; praxis denotes an ongoing, iterative, and democratic process of "reflection and action upon the world in order to transform it" (Freire 1986, 36). This process facilitates increases in both critical consciousness and eventual social change (Freire 1986; Hasenfeld 1987; Home 1999; Gutiérrez and Alvarez 2000; Zimmerman 2000). The practice of TO often involves nonhierarchical group structures, coalition and alliance building, and popular education (Bradshaw et al. 1994; Pyles 2009).

Organizing in Privileged Communities

Some organizing models acknowledge and address the multiple, intersecting identities associated with power, privilege, and oppression, recognizing that participants bring these identities to the work of organizing. Attempting to break down the simple us-versus-them dichotomy, these models seek to acknowledge and utilize the complex realities of each person's oppression and privilege (Moraga and Anzaldúa 1981; Lorde 1984; Freire 1986; Gutiérrez and Lewis 1998; Gutiérrez et al. 1998; Smith 2006; Pyles 2009; Social Justice Leadership 2010*a*).

Other models identify the specific roles that people with power and privilege can play in organizing disenfranchised communities (e.g., Rivera and Erlich 1998; Edwards 2006). Research in the field of social justice education examines how privileged individuals, usually college students, understand their privileged identities and become motivated to support social justice (Goodman 2000; Broido and Reason 2005; Reason, Millar, and Scales 2005; Edwards 2006). However, research does not examine the role that privileged allies play in community organizing or in broad social justice efforts.

Both the utilitarian (à la Alinsky) and TO approaches suggest that individuals with power and privilege should organize within their own communities; however, there also is a dearth of empirical research on how to organize these individuals to support social justice without replicating the existing power structures in their communities. This question of methods is vital to the community organizing literature because, as TO theorists note, individual transformation is necessary for comprehensive social change (Bradshaw et al. 1994; Pyles 2009; Social Justice Leadership 2010*a*, 2010*b*); thus, it is important to acknowledge and dismantle the effects of privilege on those who hold power in society.

Despite these gaps in the scholarly literature, practitioners are beginning to focus on organizing communities of power and privilege. For example, Class Action, the Catalyst Project, the People's Institute for Survival and Beyond, and other organizations conduct antioppression workshops designed to help people with power and privilege address the internalized presumption of superiority that develops as an inherent part of their positionalities. The workshops often focus on issues like racism, classism, and homophobia. Some efforts include components that train participants to organize others with power and privilege. Wealth for the Common Good, Responsible Wealth, and other groups recruit members who possess wealth. These organizations focus on establishing corporate responsibility and tax reform in order to spread the burden of taxes equitably across the socioeconomic spectrum.

In examining the community organizing model used by Resource Generation (RG), this study begins to fill the literature gap described above. Founded in the late 1990s, RG is a national organization whose

mission is to "help young people [18–35 years old] with wealth bring all they have and all they are to the social change movements and issues they care about. We organize to transform philanthropy, policy, and institutions, and leverage our collective power to make lasting structural change" (Resource Generation 2012*b*). In particular, RG draws upon transformative community organizing models as well as on values that emphasize accountability and transparency to marginalized communities. Accountability for RG includes standing with communities and movements working for social change (Resource Generation 2012*b*). This is operationalized by having people from marginalized communities as active participants and leaders in the organization. It also means focusing RG's action agenda on what will best support marginalized communities as opposed to what will maintain the power and privilege of RG's constituents. Transparency includes the organization intentionally creating cross-class spaces and being open about its agenda and decision-making process. It also includes supporting constituents so that they will be open about their wealth and will not omit facts about their life that could classify them as a wealthy person (RG constituent staff member, e-mail message to author, May 23, 2012).

The group started as a space where people with wealth could come together and talk about the effect of having wealth and what they could do about it. They also put together a resource packet to assist on this journey. The organization gradually developed workshops and later evolved into a group that engaged in organizing people with wealth to create individual and institutional change. Community-based models of social justice philanthropy also influenced the group.[3] From these combined influences, it attempts to forge a new community organizing approach developed particularly for people with socioeconomic power and privilege. Over 1,200 people participate in the organization as constituents (i.e., members of the organization with wealth who participate in education and skill building) and, although members of the RG community define themselves as wealthy or as having access to wealth, the organization's board, staff, facilitators, and advisors represent a diversity of socioeconomic class backgrounds (Resource Generation 2012*a*). This article addresses the following research question: how can a TO model be adapted in order to effectively organize people with power and privilege to support social justice while being accountable and transparent to these movements? Results from a mixed-methods case study of RG are used to address this question.

3. Community-based public foundations are supported mostly by wealthy donors who finance an accountable, democratically representative approach to grant making. In this approach, those most affected by social and economic injustices take on decision-making roles in the granting process (Goldberg 2002; Resource Generation 2010; Changemakers 2012).

Methodology

Data from this study were collected during research on a larger mixed-method case study (Stake 1995) of RG. Mixed-method case studies are not new to the field of social work (Kirk and Reid 2002); indeed, they are particularly useful because they allow the researcher to "catch the complexity of a single case" (Stake 1995, xi). They can be employed to examine questions concerning how and why (Scholz and Tietje 2002; Yin 2003) by exploring the lived experiences of participants and stakeholders. The research methods employed in this study include participant observation, interviews, a survey, and analysis of internal and external documents. This multisource approach allows me to examine RG's organizing model through triangulation and also to capture the complexity of the case within a real life context (Stake 1995; Yin 2003). I selected RG as the subject of the case study because it uses a comprehensive TO approach among people with power and privilege. I also chose the group because its model is gaining respect among social justice movement organizers and actors in philanthropic organizations.

Data Collection

Because I identify as a person with class privilege and as a longtime activist and organizer with existing relationships that cross into the RG community, I was able to gain access to the group. To support both my research interests, I developed research questions and methods in collaboration with RG's staff and leaders. In addition, this collaboration allowed me to support RG's organizational interests in understanding its own evolving model; the model's effectiveness; and the underlying issues, tensions, and assumptions. As an organization committed to accountability and transparency, RG welcomed the opportunity to engage directly and publicly whatever issues or conflicts emerged from the research. They specifically requested that I first participate in and develop a sense of how it feels to experience the RG program before beginning data collection. They asserted that this approach would help me to build trust with other participants, who are often asked to give money or to talk about their wealth and thus are sometimes reluctant to talk openly with outsiders. The staff and I jointly developed a data-collection plan in three phases. Participant observation and informal interviews were included in the first phase to gain a broader understanding of how the organization functions, as well as of the issues and concerns that arise both among participants and organizationally. Components in this phase also were designed to build trust among participants. The second phase included semiformal interviews of organizational leaders in different positions and those who were involved at different times. These interviews are intended to more deeply address the emerging themes and

issues. The third phase was an online web survey. The first two phases allowed me to gain a broad understanding of the organization through participant observation and then to use that understanding as a foundation for more focused interviews. The survey was later distributed to all people affiliated with RG in order to examine the themes that emerged in the interviews and participants' outcome behaviors. I collected data over 4 years. This article draws primarily upon the qualitative data collected during the first two phases from 2005 to 2008.

Participant observation and informal interviews.—During the first phase, I engaged in participant observation to improve my understanding of the day-to-day activities members undertake. This allowed me to build trust and note the issues that arise among RG staff, leaders, and participants. It also permitted observation of the organizational concerns and issues that emerge in RG's relationships with other communities. I attended almost all of the conferences and major programs in which RG plays a key developmental or participatory role as well as many social justice wealth conferences. I also attended or participated in conference calls, meetings, and workshops. While engaged in participant observation, I kept field notes, documenting observations concerning demographics, social networks, and emerging issues; the notes record observations on the ways that RG handles these intersecting areas in the moment and over time (Emerson, Fretz, and Shaw 1995; Lofland and Lofland 1995). To clarify observations and gain context, I also asked casual questions.

During this process, I was mindful to focus on what I observed and to record my own opinions and reactions in a separate place; these personal observations are also used as data (Emerson et al. 1995; Lofland and Lofland 1995). This phase occurred between 2005 and 2007, but I continue to observe and conduct informal interviews with the organization and its members.

Semistructured interviews.—The second phase occurred mostly in 2007 but included follow-up interviews in 2008 and 2009. This phase involved semistructured interviews with 23 people. I chose participants who played an instrumental role in creating RG's organizing model and strategies or who create curricula and lead workshops and programs for RG. These interviewees include current and former staff, board members, workshop facilitators, and other leaders from each period of RG's organizational development and across class and race.[4]

I based interviews on themes that emerged during the participant observation and informal interviews in the first phase. Questions addressed models for building critical consciousness about power and privilege, how this knowledge is applied, and how young people with

4. At the time of data collection, RG had 3–6 full-time staff members, including directors, organizers, programming staff, and administrative staff. The board of directors included 9–15 members who were leaders from grassroots organizations, foundations, and people with wealth.

wealth are organized for action. Other questions addressed interviewees' influences, their long- and short-term goals, and how they perceive their work in the context of social justice movements.

Of those interviewed, 15 identify as women, 6 as men, 1 as transgender, and 1 as gender queer. Seventeen interviewees are white; the remaining interviewees are Latino, African American, Asian Pacific Islander, or mixed race (Asian and white). Seven of the participants identify as queer, 2 as lesbians, 1 as gay, 1 as bisexual, and 10 as straight or heterosexual. The class identity varied among those interviewed; many explained that their class identity was in the process of changing. Some were in the process of inheriting wealth, and others were giving their money away. However, 15 identified as upper-class or owning class, rich, or wealthy. The remaining 8 identified as middle or working class.

Other data collected.—I also collected and analyzed internal organizational documents throughout the entire period of data collection. Although I focused especially on documents about curricula, the materials also include data on national wealth and giving trends as well as studies that RG draws upon. Other donor-activist organizations and philanthropic researchers completed some of these studies. Although I also conducted a survey among all types of organizational participants, this article draws only from qualitative data.

Data Analysis

I recorded interviews but contracted an outside company to generate transcriptions. I conducted a thematic analysis according to the questions laid out in the design and the patterns that developed (Yin 2003). To develop my understanding of this new movement of donor-activist organizations, I coded and analyzed data with an iterative approach that is predominately inductive but includes some deductive elements (Strauss and Corbin 1998). I started by reading through the data in order to obtain the big picture and to ascertain the major themes. Using Atlas.ti, a qualitative data-analysis program, I then coded the data in an iterative way. This allowed me to retrieve, recode, and refile data as needed. I then reread the data to ensure that coding is consistent. I used diagrams to understand the relationships that emerged from the data and to gain a visual representation of the relationships among the concepts (Lofland and Lofland 1995). To increase the reliability of the coding, I asked a research assistant to code the data separately, and we compared coding schemes. I engaged in member checking throughout the analysis of data and specifically because of my positionality as a member of the group I study (Erlandson et al. 1993; Strauss and Corbin

1998).[5] This included meeting with organizational leaders and participants to obtain feedback on the findings.

Although the findings of the current study are reported from the semistructured interviews, the overall model also draws on the entirety of the data set (including participant observation, document analyses, and the quantitative survey); however, reporting findings from all of these sources is beyond the scope of the present article.

Results

Values and Goals

Interviewees describe RG's organizing model as strongly informed by existing models that draw extensively from intersectional feminist, anti-oppression approaches to community organizing. They indicate that the approach is influenced by the pedagogy of popular education, the development of critical consciousness, and a long-term vision of social transformation. The group also intentionally draws from the values embedded in community-based public foundations that use an activist-based decision-making process and cross-class personnel (boards and staff).

Interviewees explain that RG's values and goals lie at the foundation of its organizing model. First and foremost, RG is committed to the importance of effecting progressive social change, in which it sees its role primarily as supporting more equitable and just resource distribution. Resource Generation's role, as interview participants see it, is to supportively challenge young people with wealth to effect socially just change by leveraging their resources (specifically, money, access, and knowledge) in a responsible and strategic way. The group argues that young adults who possess wealth cannot confront class power and privilege unless they recognize wealth's intersecting relationships with and participation in such other institutions of domination as racism, sexism, and heterosexism.

Second, RG asserts that movements to foster social justice should be led by marginalized communities. The role of people with power, privilege, and wealth is to support these movements, but this does not mean that people with wealth do not engage as full participants in the movements.

Third, RG holds that the best way for an individual to engage in progressive social change is to organize in his or her own community.

5. Positionality denotes the importance of locating oneself in one's social groups and relationships and taking responsibility for articulating one's influences and effects (Reed et al. 1997).

"You have to organize where you come from," explained Karina, a constituent and former RG staff member.[6]

However, people with power and privilege who organize in their own communities, even with the best intentions, often replicate or magnify existing power structures. This is particularly true in the realm of social justice philanthropy, as power dynamics between funders and funded efforts can be fraught and contentious (Incite! Women of Color Against Violence 2007). Resource Generation's leaders assert that their work must be open and transparent if it is to remain accountable to cross-class and multiracial social justice movements. The work must "reflect that movement," explained Caitlin, a former RG constituent staff member. This commitment is manifest in RG's organizational structure and its emphasis on openness and transparency. The commitment is also represented in the invitations RG extends to potential persons of influence in the organization (e.g., board, staff, and committee members) as well as in the types of organizations with which RG develops informal and formal working relationships.

Finally, although RG serves as a space in which people with wealth can support and challenge one another, its goal is not to create separate class-based social justice movements. On the contrary, Tam says, "Those people who are committed to this vision of change can work through respective spaces and then come together and work together." By explicitly conversing about and analyzing legacies of power and disparity at individual and institutional levels, young people with wealth are empowered to break down old patterns of power and privilege.

To pursue these values and goals effectively and be reflective of, transparent, and accountable to social justice movements, RG is strongly committed to being a cross-class, multiracial organization. Its staff, board of directors, and workshop facilitators come from a variety of class and race backgrounds and draw upon the variety of knowledge, skills, and experiences. Caitlin explains, "It's not only young people with wealth that have input or ideas about that [wealth]. The question of wealth affects everybody." Likewise, people without class privilege or power who work with RG constituents continually process personal and internalized issues regarding power, privilege, and oppression. Interviewees without self-identified class privilege explain that they choose to work with RG because the group recognizes the importance of developing a cadre of young progressive people with wealth to become effective and responsible activists and organizers. Interviewees report that RG constituents must address any internalized superiority and develop their critical consciousness while they learn to effectively and responsibly leverage their access in support of social justice movements.

6. In general, articles in *Social Service Review* do not identify research subjects by name. To protect subjects' confidentiality, this study uses pseudonyms to identify participants.

Donor Organizing within a Social Justice Movement

Young people with wealth participate in various aspects of social justice movements, playing the roles of activist, organizer, donor, and board member. However, many assume these roles without fully examining the effect of wealth on their positionalities. Although their intentions may be good, they often (mostly inadvertently) replicate existing power structures. For example, Abbie, a former constituent and staff member, explains, "There's been a pattern of people with wealth getting involved in social change organizations as the board member, as the people with the power. . . . This work is about also changing that dynamic so that people come in as partners."

Resource Generation constituents support social justice by leveraging their access to other people with wealth and power; to do so, they draw upon relationships with family, elite institutions, and other networks. They also contribute their own resources. However, because RG constituents possess disproportionate amounts of power, this process of outreach, organizing, leadership development, and action manifests itself differently than it does in disenfranchised communities. Noting these vastly different circumstances, an interviewee asserts that it is vital for constituents to distinguish the work they do from grassroots, community-based organizing among persons who are marginalized and negatively affected by systems of oppression. Karina, a former staff member and RG constituent, describes the problem of applying a traditional community-organizing model to the RG community:

> Organizing rich people is not the same as any other kind of organizing because in any other kind of organizing, what you're talking about is building power for people who are disenfranchised. . . . Now, with class privilege . . . it's the opposite. You're talking about a group of people who have enormous individual power, and if you pool that, they have enormous collective power, and a group of people who have been given the . . . the sociological training to think that [they] are each individually quite special, and completely entitled to all of [their] privileges. So if you use a conventional organizing model on that, it's a disaster.

Thus, the primary difference between traditional community organizing and new donor organizing centers on recognizing the implications of organizing people with power and privilege. The goal of community organizing among disenfranchised communities is to build power, but the goal of donor organizing is to share and redistribute power (Resource Generation 2008). This means creating and working within a framework in which "young people with wealth can learn about their place in that movement and get the tools and the support they need to take that place effectively," says Jordan, a constituent and former staff member. Abbie, a former constituent and staff member, explains where RG fits into larger social justice movements: "The role of this

work is to work with people with wealth so that they're better equipped to be a part of social change organizations in whatever form, whether as people who fund them or people who are involved in them, they can bring all of their resources to the table, including their access."

To effectively organize this constituency, RG helps constituents to bridge the gap between critical consciousness and skills for action. It works to build these bridges during each step of the organizing work. Resource Generation can be thought of as a caucus space in which young people with wealth can talk about their own positionality and are able to understand some of the side effects of their class privilege through a process of learning from and with other people who have class privilege. Tam, a former executive director of RG, explains: "In order for us to come to the table, we've got to work through our own stuff—our internalized superiority, our internalized oppression . . . and help us move through a process . . . and [each person has to] deal with [his or her] guilt and shame." Moreover, RG helps constituents develop concrete skills through its various workshops and programs (discussed below). Through these, constituents come to understand how they can leverage their access, knowledge, and experience to support social justice movements without appropriating undue decision-making power or trying to control movement goals and strategies.

Critical consciousness development.—At the center of RG's organizing model is the development of the constituent's critical consciousness. A similar process occurs when organizing to build critical consciousness within marginalized communities. Here the focus lies on those who are oppressed coming together to build a critical understanding of their positionality within social, political, and economic structures. Having those with power and privilege part of the dialogue is not emphasized. In the RG model, critical consciousness development is operationalized to incorporate accountability, transparency, and knowledge from both disenfranchised and wealthy communities.

Most interviewees (some with wealth; others without it) indicate that they engaged in extensive antioppression and critical consciousness training prior to and during their tenure at RG. However, RG learned quickly that it could not simply impose existing models of critical consciousness development on its constituents. During the organization's early years, staff interviewees report, RG examined existing models whenever the group sought to create a workshop or write materials. However, the staff encountered difficulties in using these models with RG constituents. Karina, a former RG staff member and constituent, explains why: "Our constituency [was] . . . getting lots of progressive training but coming from the angle saying, 'You have to listen to the experience of people of color, of poor people . . . and by listening to that experience you will be able to transform.' . . . But it's not true. [What] happens is, people [are] so overwhelmed [with guilt] . . . and

end up just doing a new version of classism and racism which is like, 'well whatever people of color say is great, and I bow down to it, and I do whatever they say,' and it's not an authentic relationship." As a result of these observations, RG modified and reconceptualized what was learned to address the knowledge and experience of RG constituents.

Primarily as a result of the participant observation and document analysis, I find that RG's pedagogical process of developing critical consciousness usually starts when young adults with wealth build trust and share their stories with one another. Constituents usually enter the organization through existing relationships. These relationships include people with whom they grew up, attend (or attended) school, and work. Others find their way to RG through contacts in the worlds of philanthropy, community organizing, and activism. Resource Generation provides a space in which they encounter others with similar experiences and values; they are supported in discussing the difficult and complex issues they face as young progressives with class privilege. At RG workshops, dinners, and conferences, RG constituents engage in a series of exercises that encourage them to share stories of wealth and class privilege. They also are often asked to discuss how these experiences intersect with other social identities. Through relationship and trust building, constituents grow comfortable enough to discuss often taboo topics, such as how much wealth they have and their internalized notions of superiority and domination. This environment allows them to be open and honest without placing the burden of their process on those who are most marginalized.

With the guidance of a well trained cross-class facilitation team, RG constituents process their own experiences and come to understand these experiences within a larger political context. Nancy, an RG facilitator, indicates that the workshops she conducts begin with constituents' "dialogue about their own experiences." Participants "think through where they were at and what was difficult for them." She explains that this process is designed to help participants "open their lenses" and unpack their personal stories. In addition, they learn from each other about history, institutions that build and maintain structures of power and privilege, and the movements to transform these institutions. These parallel and interwoven processes are important; they allow participants to understand their own power and privilege, but they emphasize the structures within which power and privilege developed. The framework used by RG allows constituents to understand themselves within the context of institutions that maintain the status quo and also helps them to see themselves as active participants in a relationship with social justice movements that challenges these institutions.

In some instances, the model's critical consciousness development and capacity-building elements overlap. This often occurs in the Side Effects exercise employed in the Class and Activism workshop and at

the Donor Organizing Institute. (The exercise is also described in Pittelman and Resource Generation 2005.) This exercise helps constituents recognize, reflect on, and interrupt side effects of class privilege that may arise during engagement in various social justice activities and organizations. For example, they come to recognize the stage-hog effect, which occurs when a constituent who benefits from an elite education assumes the role of spokesperson rather than considering how to support less privileged communities as their members develop their own spokespeople. This dynamic plays out in numerous ways when persons with privilege think that they are simply being supportive and providing a skill set. In reality, though, they often exclude others from decision-making processes or limit the opportunities for capacity building.

The Side Effects exercise is difficult for people with wealth; it can evoke defensive, embarrassed, or guilty responses if participants recognize ways in which they unconsciously act out their privilege in personal, community, and activist spaces. Therefore, a crucial element in cultivating capacity-building skills is the construction of a safe space in which participants may role-play with ways to interrupt side effects in themselves and others.

The development of critical consciousness can create tensions in any organization; RG is no different. Organizations engaged in antioppression work easily forget to support their staff and constituents, focusing only on challenging and critiquing each other. Interviewees involved with RG from the earliest days and those still active today stress the importance of maintaining an atmosphere that is both supportive and challenging. In the words of Octavia, a former constituent and board member, "If we lose that piece [support], we lose something really central to the organization. Then we lose our openness. We lose meeting people where they are at. We lose the doorway."

In order to effectively assist constituents in maintaining this delicate balance between challenging and supporting themselves, RG incorporates a few overarching processes to help constituents to develop critical consciousness. These include meeting people where they are; engaging in one-on-one interactions in which people can tell their stories; using humor and fun at critical learning moments; and engaging in political education that covers history, definitions, and the functions of various institutions.

Building a bridge from critical consciousness to action.—Developing a plan of action is central to RG's organizing model. An action-planning component is embedded in almost all workshops, conferences, and local meetings; constituents gain experience in action as they develop critical consciousness. These plans often also include a mutual accountability component. For example, participants are paired up so that they can hold one another accountable for their plans, process bumps in the

plan, and examine whether their partner may need to modify an action plan.

The form of the action taken depends on how a constituent progresses in critical consciousness development, personal circumstances, political vision, capacity, racial or social identity, and access to resources. The central value to meet people where they are does not necessarily involve encouraging them to stay in that place, and constituents are respectfully challenged to consider expanding action options. Once constituents enter the RG community, RG staff, facilitators, and leaders work with them to create and implement paths by which the participants engage independently and collectively in action to effect individual and institutional change.

Individual action could include creating an individual giving plan; engaging in socially responsible investing; or becoming more accountable, transparent, and self-reflective in community-based engagement, activism, and organizing. These action steps require participants to develop a skill set with which to interrupt the side effects of class privilege. Participants must also learn how to leverage access within the context of community-based activism and organizing. Several of RG's workshops focus primarily on individual change. Examples include Your Giving Plan Workshop, Financial Planning 101, and The Other Taboo: Talking about Class, Money, and Relationships.

Action at the institutional level centers on access to institutions (access that others may lack) and organizing from within. These institutions include, but are not limited to, philanthropies, all branches and levels of government, universities, and corporations. For example, while participants are encouraged to support community-based public foundations, they are challenged to leverage their access to other elite institutions, particularly the vast majority of philanthropy that is controlled by family foundations, corporations, and wealthy individuals. In this way, RG's participants work to change philanthropies' organizational practices by pressuring them to become more accountable and transparent to the communities most directly affected by the issues or conditions the grants are addressing. As mentioned previously, people with wealth often leverage their access to these institutions. Resource Generation helps constituents to explore how they may leverage access in a responsible, collaborative, and strategic manner.

As young RG constituents develop the tools required to take institutional action, they organize family members, friends, and colleagues collaboratively to change those institutions to which they have access. They also come together to create new avenues for collectively moving money. They may leverage access to philanthropic networks, challenging them to increase the rate of payouts, address racism, or expand funding for social justice efforts. Participants also may engage in giving that shifts

how money is given and where money goes (e.g., supporting community-based grassroots organizing efforts). Access to universities via alumni networks can be leveraged to change admissions policies. Corporate shareholders can leverage their status to shift corporate policies through shareholder activism and by attending shareholder meetings. Using their status as young people who will inherit wealth, constituents can lobby Congress to increase the estate (or death) tax, increase taxes on the wealthy, and mandate an increase in the payout rate of private foundations. Resource Generation trains constituents through such institution-focused workshops as Challenging Racism in Philanthropy and Transforming Power Relations, and Creating Change through Family Philanthropy.

Discussion and Implications

The values of TO are evident in all elements of RG's organizing model, though RG's tactical tools synthesize transformative and utilitarian approaches. These tools include organizing and engaging in outreach to social networks, community and leadership building, utilizing one-on-one interactions, developing critical consciousness, and meeting people where they are. The RG model differs from others in that it explicitly addresses issues that arise from the individual and collective power and privilege held among its constituency. The model incorporates accountability and transparency throughout the entire organization and throughout its organizing model. The model also takes into account needs specific to this community. Instead of building power, it promotes a sharing and redistribution of power through donor organizing. It acknowledges that even well-intentioned people with power and privilege inadvertently replicate existing systems of oppression when engaging in activism and organizing.

Resource Generation's organizing strategy builds on the knowledge that comes from having a cross-class, racially diverse leadership structure, including facilitation teams, to develop critical consciousness among people with wealth and to help them develop concrete tools for actions that support social justice movements led by disenfranchised communities. This is an important example of how RG integrates accountability and transparency throughout its organizing model. Its organizing strategy also allows RG to promote collaboratively generated knowledge that comes from a diverse set of perspectives and is provided by individuals from disparate backgrounds.

The group's organizing model identifies the importance and effectiveness of a caucus space designed specifically as a forum where those with power and privilege come together to understand their position in social and economic structures, develop critical consciousness, and learn to responsibly leverage the access they possess through their privileged status. This caucus-space process is similar to those used to heal

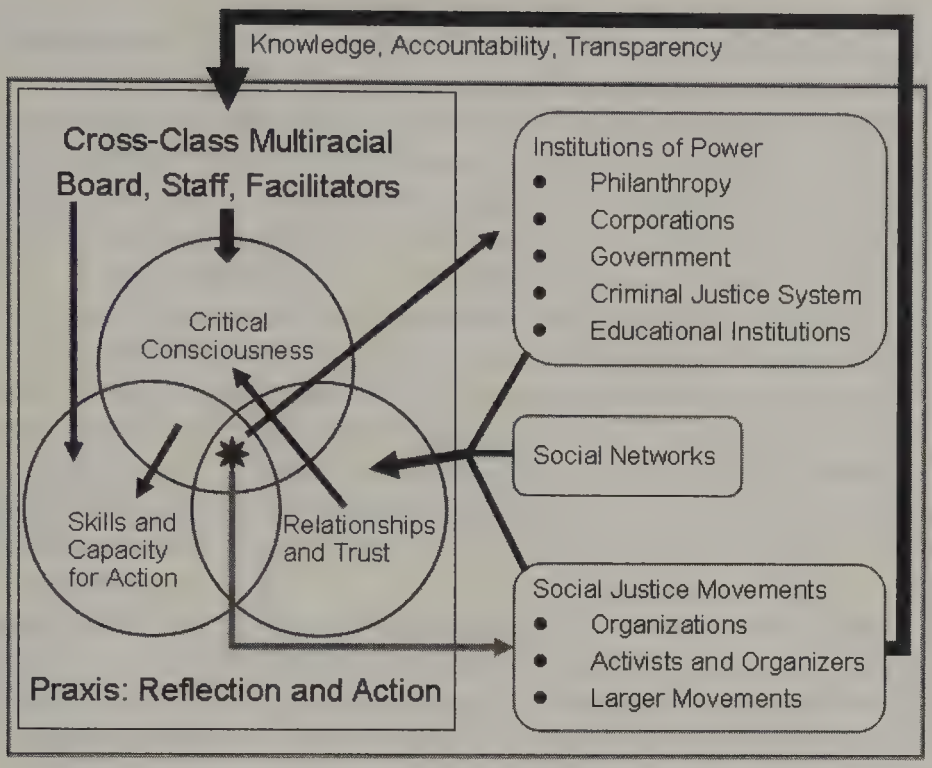


FIG. 1.—Conceptual model for organizing people with wealth

and to build power within marginalized communities (Pyles 2009). In the RG model, however, caucus-space activities address the risk that participants with power and privilege face if they do not engage their positionality and develop critical consciousness. Constituents' failure to examine their positionality can replicate existing systems of domination by damaging other activists who are marginalized, the activists' organizations, and those activists' efforts to create change.

Figure 1 conceptualizes RG's approach to organizing people with wealth. As the figure suggests, the approach is a process that bridges relationship building, critical consciousness development, and skill building within an ongoing process of praxis, action, and reflection. Thus, participants organize to transform power structures within and across their personal relationships, organizations, institutions, social systems, and communities (Bradshaw et al. 1994; Pyles 2009; Social Justice Leadership 2010*b*). The left side of the figure represents the organization and its process. The right side represents the context of the organization's work, the institutions from which RG's constituents come to the organization, the institutions that influence constituents, and those areas where constituents want to effect change. As the arrows suggest, influences from the right side permeate the internal working of the organization. Institutions and entities on the figure's right half

exert influence through internalized superiority and oppression. They also influence RG's internal organizational networks and internal knowledge, communicating such values as accountability and transparency.

As figure 1 suggests, most constituents enter RG via referrals from activist or organizing networks, philanthropy, or other channels connected with RG's network. The relationship and community building that RG fosters breaks down the isolation experienced by many young progressive people with wealth. These efforts build the trust that constituents require to support and challenge one another in the process of developing critical consciousness. As the preceding quotation from Karina indicates, people with class or other types of privilege often are immobilized by guilt when they engage in self-reflective, critical, consciousness-building activities. Although RG's model is challenging, it incorporates humor, compassion, and a sense of possibility to deal with this challenge. The process of community building lays the groundwork for this kind of support.

The curricula used in RG's programming draw from its cross-class, multiracial structure as well as on influences from feminist, antioppression, and popular education theories. Diverse facilitation teams also add to critical consciousness development; for example, a facilitator with a certain background may effectively engage constituents around the particular set of issues relevant to that background. This process is similar to ones used by antiracism and anticlassism trainers in workshops outside of RG. The RG process differs, though, because its workshops are not stand-alone events. Situated within an accountable and transparent organization, the workshops are part of a process of engaging young people with wealth to become effective activists and organizers for social justice.

The end goals identified by RG do not include cultivating critical consciousness, overcoming guilt, building self-esteem, establishing relationships, and fostering a sense of belonging. Rather, RG fosters these as steps because they assist constituents in becoming empowered actors, improve their capacities to create change, and enable them to take concrete action toward a just and democratic society. The star in figure 1 represents these empowered individual and collective actors.

As figure 1 suggests, empowered actors develop individual and institutional action plans within RG spaces in dialogue with, and under the leadership of, a cross-class group that includes movement activists and organizers. These decisions range from how RG engages in donor organizing and outreach, to action plans that constituents develop within RG workshops, to planned institutional changes developed and implemented within RG programs. They also discuss how to effectively support social change in partnership with persons or organizations that might not have access to resources.

Constituents may also use RG's cross-class environment to discuss

difficulties in maintaining openness and transparency in their organizing work as well as ways to encourage family members to change how or where they give. Working with movement organizers, constituents use dialogues, role-play, and other activities to test new skills, troubleshoot problems, and try again. This input also supportively challenges constituents to be accountable and transparent in their social justice work.

Resource Generation is not the only organization that provides a community space for support, reflection, challenging collaboration, and action. As noted previously, this concept of praxis is central to TO. The primary way in which the RG model differs from other approaches is the importance that the organization places on the thoughtful adaptation of this process for people with wealth. Additional differences are found in the group's emphasis on creating cross-class interactions, accountability, and transparency.

Although this study makes valuable contributions to literature on community organizing, it has several limitations. Case studies permit in-depth research and highlight the complexities of a particular group or process. The absence of a comparison group limits the extent to which the study's findings can be generalized. Further work is needed to determine whether these findings are consistent among other organizations of progressive people with wealth, organizations of older progressives with wealth, and organizations that engage constituents with other types of privilege (e.g., men working to end violence against women or white people organizing against racism). In applying this model to other privileged populations, researchers should use knowledge that exists within those communities and tailor the RG model accordingly.

Although my insider status as a progressive person with class privilege increases accessibility to the organization, trust among participants, and theoretical sensitivity, these very same qualities create limitations. As an insider, I lack outsider knowledge and perspective. Thus, I may have omitted questions that outsiders might ask. Although I am mindful of my engagement and biases as a participant observer, my positionality may limit my ability to critique organizational processes as I might if I acted only as an observer.

The findings that emerge in this close examination of RG's organizing model suggest that a cross-class board is an important factor in cultivating accountability and transparency among progressive young people who possess wealth and seek to align their social justice values with their actions. The findings also emphasize that it is critically important for this cross-class structure to permeate all elements of the organization in a way that is both supportive and challenging. So too, they suggest that the structure must permeate in such a way as to build community and trust as well as constituents' critical consciousness, skills, confidence,

and capacity for action. Simply put, this case confirms the importance of a cross-class structure in organizing efforts and demonstrates how to operationalize such a structure so that it shapes communities of young people with wealth.

Young progressive people with wealth, power, and privilege can be fearful, isolated, and guilt ridden but simultaneously well-connected, highly educated, (sometimes) overconfident, and entitled. This study extends knowledge about how these young people can move to a place of empowered citizenship. If they understand and are mindful of their own positionality, recognizing the strengths and challenges that come from it, they can leverage access to support social justice movements while also remaining accountable. This is the form of empowerment, or power, that RG is trying to build. It is not the exercise of power over another or the accrual of power by concentrating assets in the hands of a few. Instead, it is becoming empowered to live one's values and stand for justice. It is power to make individual change and power to collaborate with others in making collective change. Thus, although RG does build collective power, this power is accountable and transparent. The group uses it to leverage assets in collaboration with social justice movements. This study also demonstrates how to use compassion, humor, and community when organizing among people with wealth as they process internalized notions of superiority and guilt.

This examination of RG contributes to emerging organizing models that address how organizations can work with people with privileged identities to develop critical consciousness regarding power and privilege, teaching them to leverage that access in responsible support of social justice movements. The case of RG points to the effectiveness of a donor-organizing model that extends beyond the check writing of social justice philanthropy. Indeed, this emerging model challenges traditional philanthropic and other elite institutions and models to become more accountable, transparent, and democratic; it also supports and challenges constituents to be open and transparent within their various social justice movement roles, leveraging their access with creativity, responsibility, and accountability.

Note

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Book Reviews

Social Work: The Rise and Fall of a Profession? By Steve Rogowski. Bristol: Policy Press, 2010. Pp. 232. £14.99 (paper).

In this book, Steve Rogowski takes on the changing fortunes of social work in Britain. Although attentive to its history from the mid-nineteenth century, his focus falls particularly on the period from 1979 to the present. This period is marked by a series of UK governments that were hostile to welfare states in general and to social work in particular. Conservative governments (led by Margaret Thatcher and John Major), New Labour governments (led by Tony Blair and Gordon Brown), and the recent Coalition government of Conservatives and Liberal Democrats (led by David Cameron) have all sought to impose reform or modernization on social provision in Britain. Social work has been a recurrent target of government concern, reform, and reinvention.

Rogowski explores this history from a standpoint that is both intimate (he has been a practicing social worker through the period) and politicized. The combination is a powerful one. He argues that the unifying force driving the transformation of social work is neoliberalism, the ideological and political project to liberate markets (and corporate capital) from the constraints of postwar (European) social democracy. Neoliberalism has been profoundly hostile to welfarism, the public provision of welfare and other services. It also opposes the robbery of taxation to support such activities and, in general, anything that inhibits the free play of the entrepreneurial spirit. Its effects on social work have been both direct and indirect.

The indirect effects involve the erosion or dismantling of the welfare state, the critical context for the development and practice of social work in "its heyday" of the 1970s (184). Neoliberalism subjected the welfare state to several processes of reform: privatization (the involvement of corporate capital in the provision of public services), marketization (the creation of markets as a dynamic, innovative, and customer-centered way of delivering welfare), and managerialization (the belief that more and better management can transform services and organizations). At the same time, the level of welfare benefits declined and became more conditional. Reformers dismantled the model of social citizenship in favor of incentivizing work (and abolishing dependency). For the United Kingdom, US imagery of welfare dependency and models of workfare have been profoundly influential.

These changes profoundly affected the context in which social work was practiced, not least by creating new inequalities and vulnerabilities while reducing the forms of social support available. The changes also are associated with a "punitive" turn (vi), not just in the criminalization of a wider and wider range of behaviors (to the extent that the United Kingdom came to mimic the United

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States as a society of mass incarceration) but also in the treatment of those in need: the unemployed, the disabled, benefit claimants, asylum seekers, and more. Conditionality, allied to intensified scrutiny and surveillance, expressed a deep distrust of those deemed dependent or not genuinely in need. Distinguishing the genuine from the false (e.g., the scrounger, the benefit cheat, the illegal immigrant) became both a popular political discourse and a governmental obsession.

These same dynamics have also pressed directly on social work through the past 3 decades. Rogowski offers a critical analysis of a complex landscape of changes. These range from the wholesale change of education and training for social work to the fragmentation of the social work task into specialized work with different client groups. This fragmentation, he argues, is a process that shatters the coherence of social work and undermines any possibility of a shared professional identity. In the different settings, social work is further diluted by a variety of processes: the displacement of social work by the idea of social care, the emphasis on "personalization" (24; such that social work becomes a practice of enabling people to exercise choice), and the demand for multiagency or multiprofessional working (in which social work is often subordinated to other logics and ethics, such as medicine in mental health or policing in work with young people).

In the organization, policy and practice of social work are coordinated through managerialism, a force that increasingly shapes the daily experience of social work. Managerialism exercises control over social workers, limiting their discretion, subjecting them to performance targets, and ruling them via the endless supply of forms through which management information is generated and collected. But managerialism also embodies the demand that social workers should exercise control over resources and service users, even if such control is combined in a complicated and contradictory way with discourses of choice, empowerment, and personal autonomy.

Rogowski tells this history well. He provides an account of a profession pushed and pulled into increasingly uncomfortable shapes during the 3 decades of reform and modernization. He traces the apparently inexorable logic of neoliberalism, a logic that has dismantled social democratic welfare, marketized wide areas of social life, and laid waste to the profession of social work. In the last chapter of the book, he considers whether there are still possibilities for optimism, identifying tendencies and possibilities through which social work might yet be rescued or redeemed. These are a mixed bag of possibilities: the persistence of radical or critical practice in the gaps in the system, hints of a new interest in the politics of happiness and well-being, the problems of how to cope with system failures (e.g., in child protection), and even the much-discussed end of neoliberalism that some have discerned in the global economic crisis. In the end, it is not clear that Rogowski thinks these are genuine possibilities for the renewal of social work. Indeed, the book concludes with an ambiguous hope that "the tensions, dilemmas and contradictions arising from *intensification* of work, the *individualisation* of users and the *inconvenience* of, albeit reduced, discretion will hopefully stubbornly remain" such that "a niche can be found for some progressive, even radical/critical, possibilities and as such social work does have a future" (186–87).

This is not a compellingly optimistic conclusion, even though it may well be accurate. But it is, in part, a result of the mode of analysis that Rogowski brings to bear on the life and times of social work. These "tensions, dilemmas and contradictions" (186) make a surprisingly late entry to the book, given that this is fundamentally a Marxist analysis. But until the last chapter, this seems to be a Marxism that is not very interested in contradictions. If it were, the treatments

of social work's long history and of neoliberalism in the recent period might look rather different. More troubling, though, is the possibility that such an attention to contradictions might make the history of social work look less positive.

Rogowski presents a relatively positive view of the cross-class encounters of nineteenth-century social work in Britain. The depiction underplays the dynamics of power and ideology that were at stake in missions to redeem the poor and in efforts to distinguish decisively between their deserving and undeserving segments. Although he acknowledges the ways in which social work's origins are bound up in the individualizing and moralizing tendencies of organizations like the Charity Organisation Society, his account seems to miss the political antagonisms that surrounded such work, both in political society (e.g., among the New Liberal and Fabian critics of the society's approach to casework) and among working-class communities, which were profoundly suspicious of the snoopers, the do-gooders, and the Lady Bountifuls. Such popular attitudes toward social workers persisted long after the Charity Organisation Society disappeared.

For me, such a starting point grounds the long-running struggle for the soul of social work in a rather different way. At every step, the imbrication of social work into the fabric of class, gender, race, and other inequalities has had to be worked at, precisely because social work was always a practice that tended to individualize, familialize, and moralize social problems. Social work was born in the contradictions of nineteenth-century British capitalism, and its mission was to manage, contain, and resolve those social problems. Social workers were, as a result, always in a contradictory location, embedded in and trying to manage relations of domination by using their skills, talents, and personal qualities to improve the lives of targeted individuals, families, and groups. It is no wonder that social work was a recurrently uncomfortable place to be; it also is no wonder that generations of social workers have struggled to confront the contradictions of the job and have tried to imagine ways of doing it better.

Nor did such contradictions go away in the social democratic "heyday" (184). Social democracy, especially in its mean, pinched, and puritanical British version, might look good in retrospect. But even in the departments founded during the 1970s as a result of the Seebohm and Kilbrandon reports, social workers wrestled with the contradictions of social inequality, challenging the limited resources for social improvement and struggling with the management. They were also subjected to new popular political challenges from the social movements that left their marks on social work's understanding of equality, social justice, and self-determination. Such movements, arising around dynamics of gender, race, age, sexuality, and disability, have disrupted the claims of professionalism and welfarism in many settings, not just social work. Their effects are also contradictory. They create new mobilizations and new demands for equality, rights, and social justice but contribute as well to a discourse of independence, choice, and empowerment. This new set of contradictions, overlaid on those that already characterized social work, perhaps explains Rogowski's ambivalence to these movements. He sometimes sees them as allies or potential allies; at other times, he views them as influences that undermine the professional and political project of a progressive social work.

I would also want to insist on subjecting neoliberalism to an analysis that centers on contradictions. It emerged as a strategy to solve some contradictions of Atlantic capitalism in its Fordist phase, it sought to displace the costs of some of those contradictions (globally, and within countries), and it involves a gamble that the social and political costs generated in the process would not outweigh the profits that might be gained. Forced to be a consistently innovatory project, it tries to find new ways of containing its contradictions and the antagonisms

they generate. It has also had to find ways of renewing itself in the face of persistent failure and crisis. Despite the tributes that Rogowski and others pay to neoliberalism's global dominance, its history is hardly one of unbroken success or unchallenged accomplishments. Although it has become a ruling orthodoxy, neoliberalism is also confronted by increasingly sullen, grudging, and resentful populations on a global scale. These populations may acquiesce to its demands but are hardly enthusiastic advocates. It has also generated new problems, new needs, new inequalities, and new vulnerabilities on a grand scale. Should one expect social work to be the solution to them? Should one expect people to want social work as a solution to them?

In some respects, these comments reflect different locations in relation to the politics of social work, not least the difference between being inside and outside. But I think that is not all: the type of analysis makes a difference too. Insisting on contradictions and conflicts at the beginning, rather than at the end, frames social work differently. Perversely, it makes an optimistic reading of its history more difficult while locating its present troubles in a wider field of contradictions and conflicts. In the end, I share Steve Rogowski's uncertainty about the present and the future, although I am certain that the "tensions, dilemmas and contradictions" (186) will be around to trouble social workers for some time to come.

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Microfinance and Its Discontents: Women in Debt in Bangladesh. By Lamia Karim. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2011. Pp. 296. $75.00 (cloth); $25.00 (paper).

Over the past 2 decades, the small word "micro" has become indispensable in international development. Scholars demand more microdata, hunt down microfoundations for macroeconomic phenomena, and design microanalyses of human capital. Practitioners, newly allergic to broader structural approaches, find hope in microentrepreneurship, microscale programming, and, most of all, microcredit.

The micro turn happened, at least in part, because donors reoriented themselves away from the state-level ideological posturing that misdirected so much Cold War aid.[1] Moreover, microinterventions dovetailed with a growing rhetorical concern about women's inclusion in development. The territory that donors most stereotypically associate with women (households, children's health, and home production) is turf that fits under the micro rubric. But beyond postwar politics and woman-focused wordsmithing, the micro turn corresponds to a wholesale theoretical change. The turn reflects a renewed ambition to model human interaction as the intended outcome of individual preferences and choices. Detractors label this project "neoliberalism," and proponents proclaim it a significant advance in the scientific understanding of behavior.

Ethnographers, who have long directed their gaze toward local and interactional realities, might seem like important participants in any dialogue about the micro turn. When microdevelopment began to flower, however, anthropologists were mostly off searching beyond the local for such phenomena as net-

1. Austin Bay, "'Micro-Development' Offers New Hope in Third World Countries," *On Point*, March 27, 2002, http://www.strategypage.com/onpoint/default.asp.

works, global interconnections, and discourses. Lamia Karim intervenes at this paradoxical point. In *Microfinance and Its Discontents*, she strives to produce an anthropology that can analyze the practicalities and utopias driving development's new microinterventions.

Her aim is sure. Karim targets the most widely touted micro approach, microfinance, in the land of its birth, Bangladesh. Microcredit, she notes, began in 1976, when Muhammad Yunus, a Bangladeshi economist, made $27 loans to 42 people in poverty. Yunus theorized that the poorest Bangladeshis lacked fair access to credit, and he wagered that he could establish a self-sustaining loan program for them if he based loans on social collateral. This means that credit would be extended, in increasing amounts, to a group of borrowers. The borrowers would receive the next payout only if everyone in the group repaid the last one. Thus, social cooperation (and social pressure) would promote financial responsibility. Yunus directed the loans to women, believing that this would help equalize gender relations while also improving loan repayment. Microcredit lenders would provide technical advice to help borrowers transform themselves into income-generating entrepreneurs. Using this method, Yunus's Grameen Bank claimed a (now-famous) 98 percent repayment rate.

Thirty years and a Nobel Prize later, Yunus's idea is a cornerstone of international development around the world. In Bangladesh, Karim argues, microfinance nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) largely replaced government social programs; by 2006, the NGOs worked with 21 million clients and reached 105 million family members, all in a country with 140 million residents. Karim spends several chapters tracing the history of this remarkable rise. The NGOs in question largely began as service providers and organizers fighting for changes in rural social structure. But by the late 1980s, international donors, frustrated with government corruption, sought civil-society partners to help deliver new forms of aid directly to beneficiaries. The microcredit idea sealed the marriage. Donors invested in NGOs; NGOs transformed themselves into loan administrators.

Karim sets out to counter the celebratory tone that characterizes much literature on microfinance. She spent more than a year conducting ethnography in a rural area, returning several times over a period of a decade. Inspired by Michel Foucault's analysis of the discourse of governance, Karim did not confine herself to one village community. She interspersed her research with extended stays among policy makers in the capital and with side visits to rural zones far from her area of focus.

Karim's findings reveal the dark side of a development miracle. Microfinance is ubiquitous at her field site; most of her informants receive loans from several different NGOs at once, and high levels of household debt are the result. This microcredit saturation, she argues, traps women between two patriarchies. In the household, the women are usually obligated to turn over loan money to male relatives, but at the NGO office, the women remain responsible for repaying the loans. And this repayment is guaranteed through coercive means. Karim categorizes a range of disturbing NGO collection practices, including seizure of pots and pans, debtor imprisonment in NGO offices, extrajudicial arrest by police, and community councils that result in seizure of the borrower's assets. The most extreme excess is "housebreaking" (110). In this procedure, a group arrives en masse at the house of a delinquent member and forcibly destroys it, selling off the construction materials in order to recoup the lost loan. Such tactics work, above all, because they violate the borrower's honor as a woman. Indeed, Karim points out, the code of female honor helps explain why women in borrowers' groups make reliable loan recipients: it is their social vulnerability as women that provides the foundation for the high repayment rates.

Karim investigates the use of loan money. She finds that women with per-

missive, disabled, or absent male relatives tend to have more success in employing the money productively than do other women. However, NGOs at her field site increasingly loan money to local elites, sometimes through proxy borrowers, because these elites repay more faithfully than lower-income borrowers. Along with proxy loaning, Karim identifies a number of other forms of petty corruption, particularly corruption related to the prices of the mandatory tie-in products (from breeder chickens to cell phones) that borrowers must sometimes purchase with their loans. With these exploitative practices, Karim argues, NGOs come to resemble the small-town loan sharks that they claim to replace. In fact, Karim believes that loan sharks flourish in the presence of NGOs, because microcredit borrowers must frequently take out informal loans in order to pay back the NGO.

Karim ultimately identifies microcredit NGOs as a shadow state. Their overwhelming presence in rural areas, she argues, deflects demands for government antipoverty programming. Their rhetoric promotes the ethics of risk and entrepreneurship over the logic of universal rights. They make privatization happen.

Karim reaches these conclusions through a research method that she describes as "critical ethnography" (40). She clearly feels the influence of recent ethnographic trends, particularly George Marcus's "multi-sited ethnography" ("Ethnography in/of the World System: The Emergence of Multi-Sited Ethnography," *Annual Review of Anthropology* 24 [1995]: 95), the new curiosity about debt as a model for social relationships, and the call for transparency in regard to the researcher's own experiences in the field. On the last point, Karim must be applauded for her critical, often-brutal honesty. She details at length her disagreements with her interlocutors in the field and even the breakdowns in her relationships.

The book suffers, however, from the aimlessness that often plagues multisited ethnography. Multisited methods are supposed to track a single analytic object in different places. But what exactly is being followed here? "This ethnography," she insists, "is not a descriptive study of rural women and their everyday lives. It is a study of the discourses, practices, and policies of the Grameen Bank, BRAC, ASA [the Association for Social Advancement], and Proshika [microfinance NGOs]. It is also an analysis of social and gender relations in rural Bangladesh that are mediated by microfinance" (35). Nongovernmental organizations, not people, thus come across as the main actors in her account. But four different NGOs make for a broad turf to cover, and the shifting scale of her investigation does not allow her to explain their action in detail. Her narrative often oscillates among sites (one rural area, a different rural area, the scene of a riot, the capital city) without giving readers a clear sense for the density of the relationships at any one place. The work lacks the fine-grained analysis of a small group of people, an approach that characterized an older style of anthropology. But the book also does not provide the large-scale data, like statistics or intensive institutional mapping of a single NGO, that one would need to gain a feeling for national-level systems. At worst, the result has a somewhat haphazard flavor, like a compendium of problems without a clear charting of their frequency or depth. The lack of specificity shows through when she mentions her survey of 158 households but then outlines only a few of its results (54–55). Her survey sounds fascinating, and readers should hear more. Readers want and need to know the mundane details in order to feel the full potential of an ethnography.

It is ironic that the book reaches its high point when Karim disregards her own stipulation and places people rather than NGOs on center stage. Chapter 4 is a revelatory and moving collection of eight borrower stories. Karim is fair, including the successful and the struggling side by side. One reads about a cell

phone entrepreneur, a chicken farmer, a moneylender who cannily reloans her NGO cash, and a young mother whose husband committed suicide after fellow group members seized her bed in repayment for an installment she owed. Karim's unimposing touch here lets readers feel the hopes and the understated tragedy. These stories shine. With some context, they could be effectively assigned in a class on international social welfare. They concisely encapsulate Karim's results.

The book's focus on NGO dysfunction ultimately leaves readers with an overarching question: How does microfinance work? Why do people take out loans after they witness the disturbing consequences that Karim outlines? Through what social process is the loan made into an object of intense desire? One needs to understand not just microfinance's predations but also its allure.

This question has a systemic level. How can the NGOs continue to extend loans and prosper over time? Put another way, how can so many families continue to pay back loans with interest? The organizations' continued survival and the families' continued repayment both tend to suggest that the NGOs participate in genuine economic growth. Karim has several options here. First, she might argue that, through a process of "accumulation by dispossession" (xxiv), the NGOs simply extract the preexisting wealth of the poor via interest payments. But, such a process would not last long before the wealth of her poor interlocutors is eaten up or the interlocutors wise up and leave the loans behind. Second, Karim could claim that microfinance is essentially parasitic, leeching existing economic growth; households would grow even without microfinance, and NGOs suck off part of the profit that households would normally keep. But why then do people eagerly take out new loans? Third, Karim might concede that NGOs promote some economic growth, particularly among borrowers in stable or propitious situations, but have an impoverishing effect for other borrowers. The returns from successful loans would make it worthwhile for the NGOs to continue extending credit to the rest. And the hope produced by these success stories would inspire other borrowers to keep trying, even in futility. Thus, microcredit would ultimately fuel inequality inside communities.

Karim seems to basically agree with the third option. This implies that she is not criticizing microcredit per se but, rather, faulty targeting. Such a message is, in fact, not distant from the conclusions reached by economistic assessments of microcredit programs.

Karim is to be commended for closing her book with a positive proposal. She suggests the establishment of citizens' watchdog groups to create accountability and transparency in microlending. Such groups would work alongside government regulation. Her program here lines up with the recommendations of the civil society literature. One should not forget, however, that the NGOs started as the citizen-run alternative in development. Karim's own text details the long history of NGO accommodation, corruption, and regulatory capture. What could prevent this history from repeating itself in the new watchdog groups? More troubling, who is a citizen, anyway? What kind of watchdog organization would prove capable of incorporating the input of the impoverished rural people who remain so frustratingly distant from full citizenship? With more ethnographic specificity, one might have a better view on these questions. Specificity might also afford a better chance of responding to the micro turn not with discontent but with a fuller vision of the human social world.

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The Constitutional Rights of Children: *In re Gault* and Juvenile Justice. By David S. Tanenhaus. Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2011. Pp. 176. $29.95 (cloth); $16.95 (paper).

The Constitutional Rights of Children is part of the Landmark Law Cases and American Society series from the University Press of Kansas. Such books, aimed primarily at an undergraduate audience, are typically published with two goals in mind. First, the author intends to provide an in-depth account of a landmark Supreme Court case, including an interesting glimpse into the life of the main protagonist in the story. In this case, the tale revolves around teenager Gerald Gault of Globe, Arizona, who was arrested and sentenced to a long term in a juvenile detention center for a seemingly boyish prank that he most probably did not commit. Second, the author aims to place this case within the context of a line of related Supreme Court cases. Thus, Gault's story is an integral part of the analysis of the breakthrough juvenile justice rulings by the Supreme Court from the late 1960s to the early 1970s.

The first part of the book, "Desert Justice," sets the stage for the transformation of the nation's juvenile courts by examining the Arizona juvenile justice system of the 1950s. It highlights the story of the infamous Arizona Industrial School for Boys. The story of Fort Grant, as the desert school was known, is replete with all the institutional deficiencies and abuses one might imagine in a place that warehoused children. At its worst, the school was characterized by cruelty to its charges; at its best, by indifference. The section also discusses the differences of opinion among legislators, judges, and corrections officers about how to treat juvenile offenders (mostly boys) in the 1950s and 1960s. It is unclear, however, whether this institution was representative of juvenile facilities in other states and whether these debates were echoed in other locales around the nation.

Gault and a companion allegedly made obscene remarks over the telephone to a woman who reacted by reporting the incident to the police. Because procedural safeguards were minimal, Gerald was sentenced to a term of 6 years at Fort Grant for an act that might have cost an adult only 2 months in jail. Among other things, no lawyer was involved until after Gerald was pronounced guilty and sentenced. His parents were present at the hearing, but the judge did not heed their pleas for mercy. The amount of judicial discretion in such a hearing was remarkable; the court ignored virtually all the usual constraints on the admissibility of evidence.

After Gerald was sentenced and shipped off to Fort Grant, his parents filed a petition for habeas corpus, alleging that their parental rights were violated because Gerald was taken from them without due process. They were represented by counsel during the habeas corpus hearing, but they lost because the court found that the juvenile court judge had acted within the bounds of due process. Unlike Gerald's conviction, however, this ruling was appealable to the state supreme court, which was asked to review the Arizona juvenile justice system in considering the case. In what would be the beginning of its participation in challenging the constitutional deficiencies of juvenile courts, the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) played a significant role in the state court appeal. One of the most interesting parts of the story is the extent to which the public-interest law bar, specifically the ACLU, was instrumental in reforming the criminal justice system, including the juvenile courts, through an intensive litigation campaign during the 1960s. In doing so, it took advantage of the propensity of the Warren

Court to correct the due process failings of the state courts in criminal trial procedures.

In reviewing Gerald's conviction, the Arizona Supreme Court broadly held that juveniles were not entitled to appointed counsel and were not protected by the ban on self-incrimination; moreover, the state was only required to show proof of guilt by "clear and convincing evidence" (407 P.2d 760, 792 [Ariz. 1965]). Indeed, the court held that the only due process protection to which juveniles were entitled was a right to written notice of the charges against them. Given this bare minimum of constitutional rights, the Arizona court ruled against the Gaults, and Gerald remained in the state's custody, though he had been released from Fort Grant by that time.

The second section, "Legal Liberalism," presents the convergence of factors that led to Gault's ultimate victory: the tirelessness of the public interest attorneys who managed his appeal, the Warren Court's receptivity to challenges to the criminal justice system, and the Kennedy administration's emerging interest in the issue of juvenile delinquency. The author painstakingly describes each of these, showing how they contributed to the final outcome of the case. Although the High Court declined to review a similar Pennsylvania case in the 1950s, it is not surprising that it granted certiorari in Gerald's case, given its commitment to criminal justice reform in the late 1960s.

One of the virtues of the book is the author's depiction of *In re Gault* (387 U.S. 1 [1967]) against the backdrop of such cases as *Gideon v. Wainwright* (372 U.S. 335 [1963]) and the other progressive due-process rulings of the Warren Court. More specifically, the way was paved for *Gault* by the Court's ruling in *Kent v. United States* (383 U.S. 541 [1966]). A juvenile justice case decided on statutory grounds, *Kent* established a framework for the constitutional rulings to follow. This section nicely traces the way in which the Court struggled with the dilemma of merging the juvenile court model with the criminal justice model. The juvenile court model is based on the doctrine of *parens patriae*, the principle that the state has the authority to intervene to act as the parent for a child who needs protection. In contrast, the criminal justice model is based on adult due process guarantees. In addition to explaining the legal principles derived from due process guarantees, the book also details the strategy behind the litigation, demonstrating the meticulous planning behind the successful constitutional challenges. The section concludes with an in-depth analysis of the Court's eight to one ruling in *Gault.*

The last section, "Just Deserts," provides an overview of the course of the juvenile justice system after *Gault.* It illustrates the limitations of judicial decision making, explaining that the ruling left a good many questions unanswered, as it was limited to the adjudicatory phase only and did not address the pretrial and dispositional stages of the juvenile justice system. Over the next decade, the Court fleshed out the demands of due process in juvenile courts by ruling on the state's requisite burden of proof, the jury trial, pretrial detention, and appellate review.

Not long after *Gault*, the Warren Court era ended with the departure of Earl Warren and Abe Fortas; the entire due process revolution came to an end by the end of the decade as the four Nixon administration appointees ascended to the bench. As the book points out, legal liberalism soon faded away and *Gault* became a relic of an earlier era. In addition to its presentation of the law in these post-*Gault* cases, this last section highlights the interaction among the justices as they sit in conference and decide how to vote. It also includes a brief analysis of the politics of judicial appointment. The section ends with a discussion of the low level of compliance with *Gault* around the nation, and an epilogue considers the current status of juvenile rights.

This book is a good primer on the role of litigation in the juvenile-justice system reforms precipitated by the *Gault* case. It is well written and will hold students' interest. In keeping with the focus of the series on undergraduates, the book includes a bibliographic essay and chronology that will be useful to help students situate cases and events within the nation's legal landscape. Unfortunately, however, the author includes no citations to the cases, not even page numbers for quoted material. I believe that this is a shortcoming of the book and detracts from its value in the classroom.

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Child Protection Systems: International Trends and Orientations. By Neil Gilbert, Nigel Parton, and Marit Skivenes. New York: Oxford University Press, 2011. Pp. 288. $55.00 (cloth).

The protection of children from abuse and neglect remains primus inter pares among the many goals and objectives of state-sponsored child welfare systems. In this tightly written and data-rich volume, the principal editors and their distinguished international contributors shed considerable light on and offer valuable insights into the similarities and differences among modern societies in their efforts to provide safety for vulnerable children and support for their families. In the words of the editors,

> This volume builds upon and advances the comparative analysis of child protection systems that was conducted in the mid-1990s and presented in *Combatting Child Abuse: International Perspectives and Trends* (Neil Gilbert [New York: Oxford University Press, 1997]). Prompted by the rapid increase in reports of child maltreatment from 1980 to the early 1990s, that study compared social policies and professional practices in nine countries, examining differences as well as common problems and policy orientations. One of the key findings revealed important variations among the countries concerning the extent to which their child abuse reporting systems were characterized by a *child protection* or a *family service orientation.* (3)

This present effort sets out to probe the many changes in the ways in which child welfare systems "define and deal with their responsibilities for children at risk" (4). It focuses particularly on "assessing the extent to which the child protection and family service orientations continue to provide a helpful framework for understanding and comparing systems in different countries" (5). Examining specific approaches to preventing and ameliorating child abuse and neglect, the book stands these approaches against the broader context of social expenditure, which functions as a measure of societal investment in the welfare of all children and families. A succinct and well-illustrated introduction by Neil Gilbert, Nigel Parton, and Marit Skivenes is followed by 10 country-specific chapters grouped in the tripartite framework adopted by the international research group that produced the volume. The framework divides these chapters as follows: Anglo-American systems (those in the United States, Canada, and England), Nordic systems (those in Sweden, Finland, Denmark, and Norway), and Continental systems (those in Germany, Belgium, and the Netherlands). Meeting several times over the course of 2 years, the research group developed the

framework to guide the analysis and explore the implications of the findings. Specific foci include but are not limited to the following: current legislative reforms related to child abuse prevention, definitions of maltreatment, legal criteria for intervention, administrative processes of referral, and the empirical pictures of current levels of child abuse reporting and placement arrangements. A concluding chapter by the principal editors analyzes "overarching policy developments and trends since the mid-1990s and their implications for reorienting child protection systems and promoting child welfare" (5).

Contributors are recognized experts in child and family services. Their individual chapters provide clear, helpful summaries of the state of child-protection policy and services in their respective countries. Jill Duerr Berrick offers a useful snapshot of major policy and practice shifts in the United States. She touches on "differential response" systems (22), increased emphasis on "family finding" (28) activities, and use of various types of kinship arrangements. Berrick underscores the continuing importance of state and local variation in child welfare provision as well as family support's ongoing tensions with child protection alternatives. Berrick is a recognized child welfare scholar of the first rank, and her chapter contains an excellent list of references. Similarly, Nigel Parton and David Berridge, both internationally recognized senior child welfare scholar-researchers from the United Kingdom, offer an excellent summary of policy and practice trends in child protection there over roughly the past 15 years. Woven through their narrative and accompanying data tables is an important subtext on the power of egregious abuse events, including sensational child deaths, to shift both public opinion and public policy in a highly accelerated manner. A recent (2008) example involves the death of Peter Connelly, or "Baby Peter" (79), in the London borough of Haringey. As Parton and Berridge note, the child's death occurred after authorities missed numerous warning signs, many of them coming from multiple contacts with health and welfare providers. Parton and Berridge note that Baby Peter's tragic death was an important factor in the rediscovery that a soon-to-be-redesigned social work presence can serve as an important resource in child protection. Other chapters turn to much smaller societies. Marit Skivenes offers a fascinating account of Norway's attempt to move to a "child-centric" perspective (170). Anne-Dorthe Hestbaek's chapter on Denmark offers a glimpse of a system with a high proportion of children and youth in out-of-home care. Hestbaek examines the country's struggles with a "reframing" (135) effort that involves increased outreach and cooperation with families as well as increased use of evidence-based interventions.

As noted, the concluding chapter by Gilbert and colleagues outlines common themes and developments emerging from their cross-national analysis. These include (1) the challenge of operating in a public spotlight often occasioned by a highly publicized and horrific child death or severe abuse; (2) the expansion of child welfare systems due to multiple factors, such as broadening definitions of need and risk; (3) the use of foster homes and kinship placements, rather than traditional residential-care placements, as the destination of choice for children requiring out-of-home care and treatment; (4) growth in formal procedures and evidence-based initiatives that often involve the use of manualized procedures and well-specified protocols; and (5) overrepresentation of certain racial and ethnic groups, particularly African American and Native American children (250), in all levels of the child welfare system and the need to develop culturally appropriate responses to differing familial and community needs. At the conceptual level, the authors conclude that the early dichotomy between "child protection" and "family service" no longer suffices (255). They propose a third alternative, "child focus" (256), to join "child protection" and "family service" as orientations (not discrete models) that describe the ways in which

differing countries attempt to meet the needs of vulnerable children and their families.

This volume succeeds on multiple levels. First, it makes a strong and coherent case for the desirability of cross-national perspectives in child welfare policy and practices. How do differing societies interpret their mandate to protect vulnerable children while supporting the families of those children? How are commonly accepted best practices in child protection, including evidence-based model interventions, subtly shaped to fit the niches of differing cultural, social, and political contexts? How are variations in service provision (e.g., rates of children in various forms of out-of-home care) to be understood among progressive, industrialized countries? This present effort by Gilbert, Parton, Skivenes, and their contributors joins a growing body of comparative literature that offers cross-national perspective in such areas as child welfare and child well-being, evidence-based practice for high-resource-using children and youth, residential care of children, and foster care.[1] These comparative contributions and others like them ought to form the foundation stones for new child-welfare practitioners, whether they are educated in state-sponsored training efforts or schools of social work. Despite its very great size, the United States remains largely insular in its thinking about child welfare policy and services; this condition works to the detriment of the vulnerable children and families that social work seeks to serve.

Second, this slim volume attempts at least in a beginning way to connect the dots from social expenditure (including benefits and supports) to preventive and remedial services. Despite a flood of research on childhood adversity, these two spheres of activity still exist far too often in parallel universes within the academy. How refreshing, then, to witness a group of international scholars whose expertise spans the intricacies of various transfer- and child-and-family-benefit strategies to the complexities of Multidimensional Treatment Foster Care, Multisystemic Therapy, and other evidence-based interventions. Better still is the opportunity to follow their common conversation about the intersection of the preventive and remedial service spheres. One imagines that, in at least one university setting, the University of California, Berkeley, where Gilbert and Duerr Berrick are senior faculty members, the immediate beneficiaries are the students preparing for careers in child welfare as well as the citizens (clients and taxpayers) to which they will ultimately be accountable.

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1. On child welfare and child well-being, see especially Colette McAuley, Peter J. Pecora, and Wendy Rose, eds., *Enhancing the Well-Being of Children and Families through Effective Interventions: International Evidence for Practice* (London: Jessica Kingsley, 2006). On evidence-based practice for high-resource-using children and youth, see Colette McAuley, Peter J. Pecora, and James K. Whittaker, eds., "High Risk Youth: Evidence on Characteristics, Needs and Promising Interventions," special issue, *Child and Family Social Work* 14, no. 2 (2009). On residential care of children, see Mark E. Courtney and Dorota Iwaniec, eds., *Residential Care of Children: Comparative Perspectives* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009). On foster care, see Elizabeth Fernandez and Richard P. Barth, eds., *How Does Foster Care Work? International Evidence on Outcomes* (London: Jessica Kingsley, 2010).

Youth Leaving Foster Care: A Developmental, Relationship-Based Approach to Practice. By Wendy B. Smith. New York: Oxford University Press, 2011. Pp. 320. $39.95 (cloth).

Since the late 1980s, adolescent youth in foster care and the condition of aging out have increasingly captured the attention of child welfare research and policy. Studies consistently report startling outcomes for this population. As young adults, they are at greater risk than youth with no foster care history for adversity in adulthood, including incarceration, poverty, early parenting, homelessness, and poor mental and physical health. Despite a strong policy response to fund programs for these youth until they reach age 21, the development and implementation of research- and theory-informed models for practice have not advanced at rates equal to that policy response. Moreover, with a few notable exceptions, analyses of practice implications remain atheoretical. They are largely disconnected from literatures on trauma, neurobiology, and human development in the context of maltreatment. In *Youth Leaving Foster Care: A Developmental, Relationship-Based Approach to Practice,* author Wendy Smith draws from an impressive array of interdisciplinary literatures to propose practice principles for work with youth transitioning out of care. The book is a much welcomed and timely contribution.

Originating from the need for a classroom text, Smith's 13-chapter book is divided up into five major domains of discussion. Smith devotes the introductory section's first chapter to exploring the evolution of child welfare policy in the United States. She reminds readers that race, poverty, and parental incarceration are highly relevant considerations complicating effective and equitable child welfare practice. The second chapter reviews a host of theoretical perspectives and concepts used throughout the book. Smith rightly argues that current research is imbalanced in its focus on outcomes and programs, leaving the field with a theoretically and developmentally impoverished knowledge base. In the theory chapter, Smith draws from brief case vignettes and uses these same vignettes to illustrate the application of several different theoretical lenses that become central throughout the book's discussion. Although the text includes expected theoretical traditions (e.g., attachment, resilience, and systems theory), Smith also engages the neurobiological and developmental literatures.

In the second section, titled "Development," the reader is taken through an extensive review of literature and theory on neurobiology and development (chap. 3), attachment (chap. 4), and adolescent development (chap. 5). Readers will appreciate the discussion of racial and sexual identity as heightened developmental tasks during adolescence. Processes of sexual- and racial-identity development are rarely examined among foster care populations; Smith should be commended for raising these issues. However, a cutting-edge contribution would be to push beyond mainstream theory and research to propose models of identity development that are maximally relevant and attuned to foster care populations. Arguably, so-called normative processes of identity formation in adolescence and beyond are complicated and uniquely shaped by childhood experiences of abuse, neglect, family instability, removal from parental care, and more than one family (and potentially cultural and racial) context.

Part 3 examines aspects of mental health relevant to youth in foster care and devotes a chapter to anxiety, trauma, and post-traumatic stress disorders (chap. 6). Additional chapters consider mood disorders and self-harm (chap. 7), sub-

stance abuse (chap. 8), and mental health dimensions of delinquency (chap. 9). This is the strongest section of the book. Smith highlights the intersections of juvenile delinquency, mental health, and histories of maltreatment. This is a welcomed and novel decision. Similarly astute is the articulation of a multisystems perspective to understand "crossover kids" (162; children involved in both child welfare and juvenile justice systems) and their mental health and developmental needs.

Perhaps the greatest contribution of this section comes in a discussion of treatment and intervention approaches. That discussion recognizes enduring complexities presented by the developmental consequences of early childhood maltreatment and other adversities and by conceptualizing removal from home as potentially traumatic. Further, these risks and challenges are examined in a context that acknowledges a child's potential for resilience. By returning again and again to the roles of maltreatment and relational trauma in development, Smith reminds the reader that "the negative sequelae of abuse and a problematic attachment are not ameliorated by a new, more nurturing attachment" (152). The importance of this point, buried in the center of the text within the chapter on delinquency, may be lost on some readers. In my review, it is one of the most radical statements that this book makes; Smith challenges the child welfare field to recognize that providing permanent and positive family placements (held as the gold standard outcome in child welfare policy and practice) is only a starting place for work with this population.

In part 4, Smith uses chap. 10 to introduce specific program considerations by highlighting subgroups of youth, including those with disabilities; pregnant and parenting youth; and lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) youth. Of special significance are Smith's calls for programs to address the needs of LGBT youth and her discussion of youth with disabilities; these are two noteworthy contributions to the field. Few discussions of foster care, in general, and youth aging out of care, in particular, recognize the sexual identity needs of youth in foster care. By discussing issues of sexual identity in general (for both LGBT and heterosexual youth), Smith normalizes this domain as a shared dimension of human development. However, she goes on to highlight how the identities of LGBT youth become ignored or pathologized, and thus unsupported, within the current heterosexist program structures. One glaring omission in this discussion, however, is the intersection of gender identity with emerging sexuality. The text does an excellent job in examining the added challenges that youth with disabilities face in their efforts to achieve success and independence in adulthood. This population of youth aging out of care continues to exist on the margins of policies and practices. Other program areas discussed in the remaining two chapters focus on programs for youth transitioning to adulthood (chap. 11) and on transitional living programs (chap. 12). Each chapter concludes with a summary of "practice principles."

In the final section, the text introduces "future directions" (233) for the field and concludes with specific policy and research recommendations. Among the noteworthy points are a call for policies that allow youth who leave care before the age of 21 to return to care, the observation that there is a need for research to clearly define and measure success for this population, and a recommendation for the creation of programs that address developmental and aftercare needs of youth.

Perhaps the two greatest areas of weakness in the book are grounded in its strengths. First, in Smith's deep reviews of the literatures on neurobiology, attachment, and development, she falls a bit short of providing an equally in-depth or novel proposal for how one might apply this knowledge base to guide new directions in child welfare practice, research, or policy. Instead, the text

provides a review of existing programs and practices, case vignettes, and a list of practice and treatment principles, which are often relegated to text boxes. Although the field is certainly advantaged by Smith's identification of what to do, it would be greatly advanced by a detailed exploration of how to proceed with practices that are informed by the theory and research explored in this text. This criticism, however, does not undervalue the important contribution the text makes in holding the child welfare field accountable to these diverse literatures. Smith imposes this accountability by articulating developmental and relational domains of concern as well as by proposing principles to guide future practice, research, and policy.

Second, the purported focus on "youth leaving foster care" suggests an unnecessarily narrow perspective from which to discuss the issues and concepts central throughout the text. This suggestion raises the possibility that the book's import and relevance are understated; readers may presume that it focuses solely on youth who age out of or are leaving foster care rather than on how to work with youth (and their families) throughout foster care involvement. This text is certainly relevant for efforts to understand all youth in child welfare as developing beings who experience some form of maltreatment or adversity in their families of origin.

In sum, the important issues this text raises, as well as the literatures and theories from which it draws, are crucial and relevant to effective child welfare practice with youth and families affected by the child welfare system. These include families that experience kinship care, adoption, reunification, and intact-family services. I hope that this text marks the beginning of a shift in the field toward the use of interdisciplinary theory, literature, and research. I also am hopeful that Smith's work will expand concern for how to best promote the healthy development of all youth and families involved in the child welfare system.

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Brief Notices

Narrative Inquiry. By Kathleen Wells. New York: Oxford University Press, 2011. Pp. 176. $26.95 (paper).

Kathleen Wells's contribution to the Pocket Guides to Social Work Research Methods series "presents a reader-friendly introduction to narrative inquiry. It focuses on one particular research design, the case study design, providing a broad framework in which narrative and other relevant data may be collected. . . . With dozens of transcript examples taken from research conducted around the English-speaking world, this guide reviews prevailing analytic frameworks for the analysis of transcribed interviews, which include analyses of narrative content, structure, and context. Two cutting-edge approaches, critical narrative analysis and contextual discursive analysis, are also examined. . . . Issues pertaining to validity, reflexivity, and ethics in relation to narrative inquiry are also delineated. Appendices contain a summary of narrative analytic methods and a detailed guide for developing a narrative research proposal." (Publisher's synopsis)

The Time Use of Mothers in the United States at the Beginning of the 21st Century. By Rachel Connelly and Jean Kimmel. Kalamazoo, MI: W. E. Upjohn Institute for Employment Research, 2010. Pp. 165. $40.00 (cloth); $18.00 (paper).

Drawing upon their analysis of data from the nationally representative American Time Use Survey, Rachel Connelly and Jean Kimmel examine how American mothers spend their time and how mothers' time-choice decisions affect the development of their children. Connelly and Kimmel reject characterizations of caregiving in traditional models, arguing that "it is behaviorally distinct from paid work, leisure, and household production" (132). The authors also consider how a mother's time with her children is affected by a husband or partner and by the time of day she is employed. Reinforcing findings from other studies, they note that the complexities of caregiving can force compromises on maternal and child well-being.

Globalization, Social Justice, and the Helping Professions. Edited by William Roth and Katharine Briar-Lawson. Albany: State University of New York Press, 2011. Pp. 274. $75.00 (cloth); $24.95 (paper).

"Helping professions such as social work, counseling, and community building can no longer be understood outside a global framework. While the very notion

of helping professions entails a social justice perspective, the relationship between the effects of globalization and the requirements of social justice have been missing from the literature, education, and practice of these fields. This book provides an understanding of the economic and social dimensions of globalization, shows how globalization increases the interdependence of nations, explores the particular risks and opportunities it presents, and examines how some aspects of globalization can exacerbate oppression and marginalization." (Publisher's synopsis)

Expanding Work Programs for Poor Men. By Lawrence M. Mead. Washington, DC: AEI Press, 2011. Pp. 170. $39.95 (cloth).

"*Expanding Work Programs for Poor Men* sets out a strategy for raising work levels among poor men. . . . Lawrence M. Mead explores the psychology of male nonwork and evaluates the successes and failures of existing work programs for poor men, some linked to child support and others to the criminal justice system. . . . Mead advocates combining work programs with improved wage subsidies, provided that men work steadily and pay child support. Finally, he recommends that the federal government cautiously expand men's work programs while conducting more evaluations to learn more about how best to design and run them." (Publisher's synopsis)

The Ethics of Total Confinement: A Critique of Madness, Citizenship, and Social Justice. By Bruce A. Arrigo, Heather Y. Bersot, and Brian G. Sellers. New York: Oxford University Press, 2011. Pp. 320. $75.00 (cloth).

The Ethics of Total Confinement "explores the phenomena of captivity and risk management. . . . The authors present a controversial thesis that demonstrates how the forces of captivity and risk management are sustained by several interdependent 'conditions of control.' These conditions impose barriers to justice and set limits on citizenship for one and all. Situated at the nexus of political/social theory, mental health law and jurisprudential ethics, the book examines . . . the moral reasoning lodged within prevailing judicial opinions that sustain captivity and risk management practices impacting: (1) the rights of juveniles found competent to stand criminal trial, the mentally ill placed in long-term disciplinary isolation, and sex offenders subjected to civil detention and community re-entry monitoring; (2) the often unmet needs of victims; and (3) the demands of an ordered society. . . . The book concludes with . . . recommendations for future research and meaningful reform." (Publisher's synopsis)

The Rights of the Defenseless: Protecting Animals and Children in Gilded Age America. By Susan J. Pearson. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011. Pp. 280. $45.00 (cloth).

"In 1877, the American Humane Society was formed as the national organization for animal and child protection. Thirty years later, there were 354 anticruelty organizations chartered in the United States, nearly 200 of which were similarly invested in the welfare of both humans and animals. In *The Rights of the Defenseless*, Susan J. Pearson seeks to understand the institutional, cultural, legal, and political significance of the perceived bond between these two kinds of helpless creatures, and the attempts made to protect them. Unlike many of today's humane organizations, those Pearson follows were delegated police powers to make

arrests and bring cases of cruelty to animals and children before local magistrates. Those whom they prosecuted were subject to fines, jail time, and the removal of either animal or child from their possession. Pearson . . . argues that while these reformers claimed nothing more than sympathy with the helpless and a desire to protect their rights, they turned 'cruelty' into a social problem, stretched government resources, and expanded the state through private associations." (Publisher's synopsis)

Unprotected Labor: Household Workers, Politics, and Middle-Class Reform in New York, 1870–1940. By Vanessa H. May. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2011. Pp. 264. $65.00 (cloth); $26.95 (paper).

"Vanessa May explains how and why domestic workers, the largest category of working women before 1940, were excluded from labor protections that formed the foundation of the welfare state. . . . May argues that working-class women sought to define the middle-class home as a workplace even as employers and reformers regarded the home as private space. The result was that labor reformers left domestic workers out of labor protections that covered other women workers in New York between the late nineteenth century and the New Deal. By recovering the history of domestic workers as activists in the debate over labor legislation, May challenges depictions of domestics as passive workers and reformers as selfless advocates of working women. *Unprotected Labor* illuminates how the domestic-service debate turned the middle-class home inside out, making private problems public and bringing concerns like labor conflict and government regulation into the middle-class home." (Publisher's synopsis)

Choices Women Make: Agency in Domestic Violence, Assisted Reproduction, and Sex Work. By Carisa R. Showden. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2011. Pp. 312. $75.00 (cloth); $25.00 (paper).

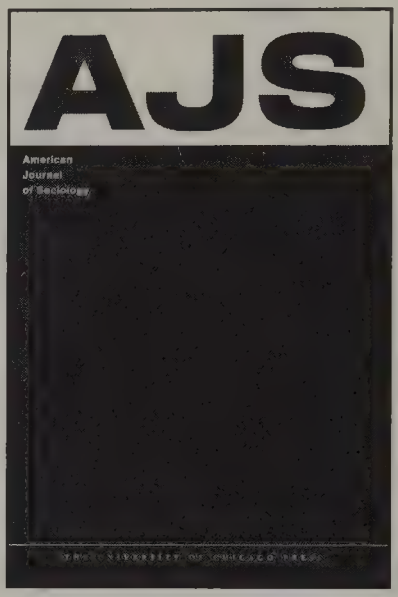
"Combining theoretical and empirical perspectives, Carisa R. Showden investigates what exactly makes an agent and how that agency influences the ways women make inherently sensitive and difficult choices. . . . In Showden's analysis, women's agency emerges as an individual and social construct, rooted in concrete experience, complex and changing over time. She traces the development and deployment of agency, illustrating how it plays out in the messy workings of imperfect lives. In a series of case studies, she considers women within situations of intimate partner violence, reproductive decision making, and sex work. . . . Showden's understanding of women's agency ultimately leads her to review possible policy and legal interventions that could improve the conditions within which agency develops." (Publisher's synopsis)

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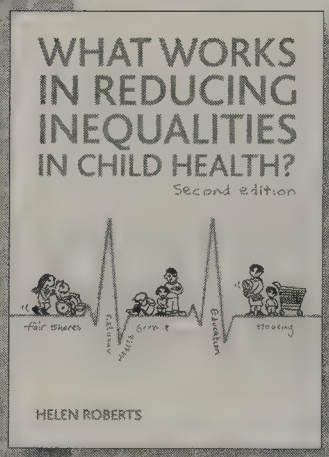
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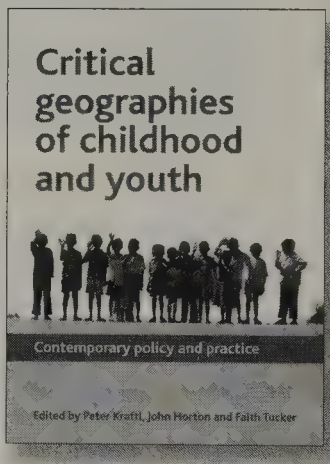
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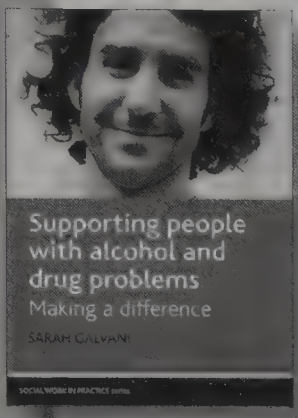
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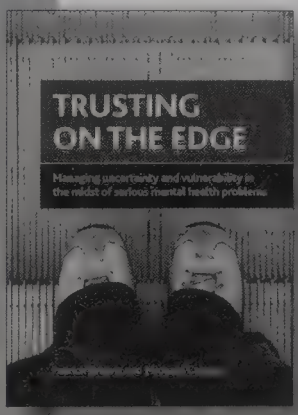
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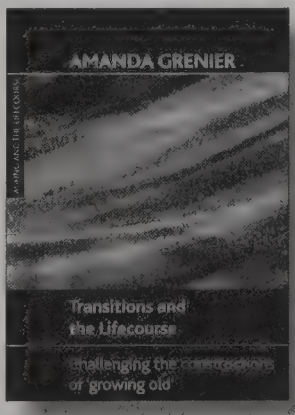
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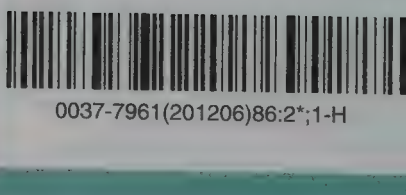
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The *Review* features balanced, scholarly contributions from social work and social welfare scholars as well as from members of the various allied disciplines engaged in research on human behavior, social systems, history, public policy, and social services. The journal welcomes contributions on a wide range of topics, such as child welfare, poverty, homelessness, community intervention, race and ethnicity, clinical practice, and mental health. The *Review* also features discerning essays and substantive, critical book reviews.

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The Role of Earned Income Tax Credit in the Budgets of Low-Income Households

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Cornell University

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Emmanuel College

Jeffrey R. Kling
Congressional Budget Office and the National Bureau of Economic Research

The annual receipt of large tax refunds, primarily due to the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC), provides households with unusual opportunities to pay old bills and build assets. To examine these opportunities, the study surveys 194 black, Latino, and white parents who received EITC refunds of at least $1,000; in-depth interviews followed 6 months later. The majority of households (57 percent) report that they planned to allocate a considerable portion of their refund to savings, and 39 percent are estimated to accomplish their goal. Although 72 percent of the sample planned to pay bills and debt with the refund, 84 percent are found to do so. The results also suggest that households often readjust planned allocations to meet emergencies, debt, and bills. Despite setbacks, many recipients have significant asset accumulation goals, which they say are fueled by the expectation of ongoing annual tax refunds.

Social Service Review (September 2012).
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Welfare, as the United States knew it, ended in 1996. Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) replaced the entitlement program Aid to Families with Dependent Children. The new program imposed strict time limits and participation requirements on beneficiaries. Over the next 15 years, the number of families receiving such assistance plummeted from roughly 4.5 million in 1996 to 1.9 million in 2011 (US Department of Health and Human Services 2012). However, one could argue that welfare's transformation actually began 2 years earlier.

In 1993, the Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act (107 Stat. 433) roughly tripled the value of the means-tested benefit of the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC), then a little-known program for low- and moderate-wage workers with dependent children. When the EITC began in 1975, the program only served 6.2 million families with dependent children. In 2011, it dwarfed the old welfare system, serving around 26.2 million families, which received nearly $58.6 billion (US Department of the Treasury 2011). From 1995 to 2009, the EITC also transferred more money to individuals than did the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), the federal food-assistance program formerly known as the Food Stamp Program.

Because the credit is sizable and is received once a year as part of an annual tax refund, it plays a unique role in the budgets of many families. However, there is little direct evidence on how recipients' plans to use the refunds evolve. There also is little research on the extent to which the tax refunds promote social mobility through asset accumulation or on the EITC's potential to enhance households' long-term economic well-being through such accumulation (Sherraden 2001).

The limited literature on recipients' EITC allocations suggests that households sometimes purchase big-ticket items but that much of the tax credit may well be devoted to current consumption and debt repayment rather than to the accumulation of assets or savings (Beverly et al. 2005). To date, there are few fine-grained analyses of the micro-level decision-making processes and contextual factors that underlie these allocations. Such information is critical for policy makers seeking promising ways to decrease the share of the EITC that is allocated to current consumption and to increase the portion allocated to expenditures that boost family assets, thereby increasing family economic stability. This information could be useful in efforts to encourage asset building among the poor as a long-term antipoverty strategy. The current study contributes to this literature by using surveys and in-depth interviews over a 6-month period to trace planned and actual expenditure patterns and to explain the reasons for the observed patterns. It also contributes by developing understanding of how households use the refunds to manage stretched budgets and plan for the future.

EITC Background

The EITC is a refundable tax credit for low-wage workers in the mainstream labor market. The credit is an earnings supplement whose primary goal is to support families with children (Stegman, Davis, and Quercia 2003). Policy makers and others refer to it as the "nation's largest federal antipoverty program" (Holt 2011, 1). In 2010, the EITC lifted roughly 6.3 million people out of poverty, including 3 million children (Center on Budget and Policy Priorities 2012). Without the EITC, one-quarter more children would live in poverty (Center on Budget and Policy Priorities 2012). The EITC program is also viewed as a vehicle that benefits communities, boosting local economies and decreasing crime rates by raising wages. According to Steve Holt (2011), the EITC program created an assortment of social, business, and political activity that he refers to as the "EITC Movement." The movement emerged approximately a decade ago, and the financial service industry is involved, pushing policy and creating products tailored to capture income from the EITC. For example, for-profit tax preparers increased the number of offices in areas where many of the residents received the EITC. Firms like Jackson-Hewitt offer families immediate access to some of their tax refund through refund anticipation loans. However, these firms often charge them high fees and interest rates (Holt 2011).

In addition, EITC outreach and advocacy information emphasizes that the program provides low-income working families with opportunities for savings and asset building. Nonprofits, such as Action for Boston Community Development (ABCD), explicitly point to these opportunities, emphasizing that the EITC puts "more money in the pockets of hard-working people" (ABCD 2008, 2) and helps recipients to "permanently escape poverty" through asset development (1). The Boston Earned Income Tax Credit Coalition (n.d.) also highlights the potential for asset accumulation in its literature and encourages families to file for free: "Don't spend any of your refund paying for tax preparation—get your taxes prepared for FREE at a neighborhood tax preparation site and keep the money in your pocket! SAVE it or use it to build a better future for you and your family." Additionally, Chicago's Center for Economic Progress (2012, 1) notes that tax time can be an "opportunity for low-wage workers and their families to get ahead . . . [and possibly] move from financial uncertainty to financial security."

Families with dependent children may receive sizeable benefits from the EITC, but only a modest credit is available to adults who do not reside with children. The EITC offers a subsidy to those whose earnings are under a certain threshold; in 2011, the threshold was $40,964 for a single parent with two children and $46,044 for a comparable married fam-

ily (Internal Revenue Service 2011). Unlike other government antipoverty programs, the EITC is typically delivered in a lump sum each year between February and April, when most Americans file their tax returns. Although workers in 2006 had the option of claiming a portion of their expected EITC on a monthly basis, only about 3 percent did so (US Government Accountability Office 2007).[1] Damon Jones (2010) finds that interventions to provide information and reduce participation barriers have essentially no effect on advance claiming. This is even so for a group found to be responsive to similar interventions that encourage 401(k) retirement savings. His findings suggests that the ability to redirect the lump sum EITC to different purposes (e.g., rather than to retirement savings) is important. Because the annual credit is sizeable (in 2001, close to $6,000 for a family of three), families can use it to ease stretched budgets and to accomplish long-term financial goals.

In 2009, the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (123 Stat. 115) increased EITC benefits for families with three children and increased the amount of money that married couples can make before they enter the range at which EITC eligibility phases out. The Tax Relief, Unemployment Insurance Reauthorization, and Job Creation Act of 2010 (124 Stat. 3296) extended these program expansions through 2012. In 2011, families with three or more children could claim a credit of up to $5,751, families with two children could receive up to $5,112, and families with one child were eligible for as much as $3,094 (Internal Revenue Service 2011). Some families are able to augment their tax refunds with the Additional Child Tax Credit. That credit provides up to $1,000 per child if the family has more than $3,000 in earnings or three or more children. In addition, the District of Columbia and 23 states have small programs that provide an earned income credit (Center for Budget and Policy Priorities 2011). Among these are Massachusetts and Illinois, the states where the current study is conducted.

Massive change has come to US social policy from welfare reform and refundable tax-credit expansion. These twin forces greatly increase the emphasis on moving safety-net program participants into employment (Holt 2011). Because of this change, some who are in need lack access to benefits. Gregory Acs and Pamela Loprest (2004) estimate that, at any given time in the initial years after welfare reform, one-third of former welfare recipients had neither employment nor any visible means of support; that is, they had no other source of income and did not live with an employed partner or spouse. During the recent recession, TANF rolls hardly increased (US Department of Health and Hu-

1. This is likely due to strong preferences for the lump sum payment over monthly disbursement but also to the additional effort required to establish monthly payments (Barr and Dokko 2006). Policy makers eliminated the option of advance claiming for 2011 and subsequent years.

man Services 2010), suggesting that the size of this group grew. However, those who worked, especially full-time and full-year, garnered substantially larger benefits than they would have earned prior to the expansion of the EITC. Instead of taxing their earnings, the government supplemented them. In some cases, the supplement either exceeded or nearly equaled the maximum value of the cash welfare payments for nonworkers (Internal Revenue Service 2010; Rowe, Murphy, and Mon 2010).

The policy debate continues over the role of the EITC and its redistributive nature. On one side of the debate, the EITC is seen as a social contract to insure that working families do not have to live in poverty (Holt 2011). Others push this idea further, arguing that the EITC should become a vehicle by which low-income families strengthen formal ties to financial markets so that recipients can save and build assets (Smeeding et al. 1999). Michael Stegman and colleagues (2003) argue that the EITC can help make housing more affordable. On the other side of the EITC debate are recent proposals to cut means-tested programs like the EITC. These proposals come from policy makers who want to increase self-sufficiency and decrease dependence on government. Wisconsin Governor Scott Walker reportedly proposed EITC cuts because he sees the program's goal as income redistribution (Hall 2011).

Embedded in these debates are other, subtle yet critical differences between this new safety net (EITC) and the old one (welfare). First, the EITC is administered through the Internal Revenue Service, a government entity that interacts with all American workers, not with just a stigmatized few. It is not the welfare office but the for-profit tax preparer that nearly 70 percent of EITC claimants approach to obtain benefits (Rhine et al. 2006). And while critics point to the fact that the for-profit tax preparation industry makes substantial profits from EITC claimants each year (Kim and Berube 2002), the current data suggest that clients also perceive real advantages. At H&R Block and its competitors, an EITC claimant is no longer a recipient but a customer. The facilities are pleasant, well lit, and clean. This environment stands in stark contrast to the often rundown welfare office, the long wait to be seen, and the caseworker who may be more concerned with detecting misuse of funds than with client service (Lipsky 1983; Edin 1993).

In the trend to view the EITC claimants as customers, it is important to note that tax preparers often play a key role in influencing both EITC eligibility and the level of benefits that families receive. Some research examines various stages in the refund process to identify those points at which tax preparers can affect the size of tax refunds that families receive. For example, preparers play a role in the number of children claimed and the amount of self-employment income reported. Searching for behavioral responses to taxation, Emmanuel Saez (2010) looks at whether the reported income of self-employed filers bunches near the phase-in point of the EITC. Saez argues that self-employed filers

may learn from tax preparers how to report income so as to maximize their tax refund. Raj Chetty and Saez (2009) find statistically significant increases in earnings after tax professionals provide families with simple, personalized information. The current study does not include data from interviews with tax preparers and so lacks direct evidence on these issues. However, according to the Code of Federal Regulations (31 CFR 10.27 [2011]), a pricing model is illegal if the fee for tax preparation is based on a percentage of a tax refund (Perez 2010). Tax preparers may have other incentives to help clients maximize their returns. These incentives may include the desire to stimulate return business or obtain referrals from existing clients. The ways in which tax preparers can influence eligibility and benefits represent an important area for future research.

Previous Research

Research on EITC allocations shows that a sizeable majority of recipients plan to spend at least some of their refund on a car-related purchase, residential move, savings, or tuition payments (Smeeding, Phillips, and O'Connor 2000; Smeeding 2002; Spader, Ratcliffe, and Stegman 2005; Rhine et al. 2006). The scarce literature on families' actual refund allocations suggests that they do spend a portion on such sources, although they perhaps do so less often than the literature on planned allocation suggests. Most research provides information on how many EITC recipients allocate any of their refund for these purposes, not on how much of the refund is spent on those priorities. (See Johnson, Parker, and Souleles [2006] and Parker et al. [2011] for information on tax rebates and families' actual expenditures.) In addition, there is little evidence on the microlevel decision-making processes or the rich array of contextual factors that shape EITC allocations.

Planned and Actual Refund Allocations

The best direct evidence on planned uses for the EITC comes from five local-area surveys. These surveys capture data from Chicago, New York, North Carolina, Detroit, and a set of communities along the Mexican border in the states of California, Arizona, New Mexico, and Texas.

Timothy Smeeding and his collaborators surveyed over 800 EITC applicants who used a free, nonprofit tax-preparation service in Chicago (Smeeding et al. 2000; Smeeding 2002). Asked to list their planned uses for the EITC, the majority of respondents to that survey report that they planned to spend all or part of the refund on bills or commodities, but nearly half also say that they planned to save all or part of their check, usually for an asset-building purpose. In addition, more than half of re-

spondents say they planned to spend all or part of their credit in a way that could enhance their level of assets.[2] Similar studies in New York and North Carolina also find that a substantial number of EITC filers have savings goals (Spader et al. 2005; Rhine et al. 2006).

Four of the five studies measure actual EITC allocation and not just planned allocation. In the North Carolina study (Spader et al. 2005), researchers reinterviewed filers 9 months after they received a refund. The interviews attempted to assess whether those who planned to save some of their refund actually did so. They find that plans to save influence savings behavior but that respondents save less often than they planned. A separate survey of about 5,000 household heads in Mexican immigrant communities along the border asked whether participants ever used their refund for a variety of items. Fully 62 percent say they used their refund at least once to pay bills, but using it to purchase durable goods is also commonly reported (Robles 2007). A survey of low- and moderate-income households receiving EITC in Detroit asked respondents the same types of questions as those posed in the Mexican border study (Barr and Dokko 2006); the results from Detroit are similar.

These surveys, though valuable, have several important limitations. First, neither the Chicago nor the New York study reliably measures actual EITC allocations, only plans. As the North Carolina study shows, plans and actual behaviors, though related, vary to a statistically significant degree (Spader et al. 2005).[3] Second, the surveys that gather information on refund allocations measure only whether the respondent spends any of the refund in a given category; none queries respondents about the proportion of the refund spent on each category. Third, the North Carolina study has a low response rate at follow-up (66 percent), and only 23 of the households interviewed at follow-up report receipt of substantial refunds ($1,000 or more). Fourth, all of the surveys are limited to a single site. Fifth, three of the five studies rely on nonprofit tax preparers to generate the sample, but only a tiny portion of EITC recipients use such services to file their taxes (Rhine et al. 2006). A final limitation is that surveys in general cannot illuminate in much detail why respondents allocate their refunds in the way they do. For important exceptions, see studies by Jennifer Romich (2006) and Romich and Thomas Weisner (2000).

2. Romich and Weisner (2000) and Beverly and colleagues (2005) report similar findings from their small ethnographic studies. In follow-up interviews for a panel study of EITC recipients at a volunteer tax-preparation program in North Carolina, Spader and colleagues (2005) find that 55 percent of respondents who reportedly planned to save their refund did not actually save any of it.

3. Only a quarter of respondents participated in the telephone follow-up survey fielded 6 weeks later. The follow-up attempted to ascertain actual EITC expenditures by that date. Low response rates and the brevity of time from EITC receipt to telephone follow-up limit the usefulness of the results.

Unlike the previous research, a study by Qin Gao, Neeraj Kaushal, and Jane Waldfogel (2009) does not directly examine families' EITC allocations. Instead, that study uses data from the Consumer Expenditure Survey (1994–2004) to examine changes in general expenditures since EITC expansions in the early 1990s. In lieu of a direct measure of allocations, Gao and colleagues (2009) select a sample of single mothers, theorizing that the mothers comprise a group likely to be eligible for EITC. They find that, among mothers with a high school degree or some college, expansions in the EITC are associated with increases in consumption of food, alcohol, tobacco, and clothing. The greater EITC benefits also appear to be associated with less total family debt in this group. In contrast, EITC increases are not associated with increases in those expenditures among women with less than a high school education; they are found to use their refund to pay off debt. However, the study by Gao and colleagues (2009) lacks direct measures of allocations and information on the motivations that drive the changes in families' spending.

Reduction of Unsecured Debt

Families' motivations for refund allocations are especially important if portions of the credit are allocated to reduce unsecured debt and to build assets. Unsecured debt includes such items as overdue bills, credit card debt, medical bills, loans from family and friends, obligations tied to overdraft provisions on checking accounts, and unsecured loans from banks or credit unions (Sullivan 2008; Shaefer, Song, and Shanks 2011). Between 1989 and 2006, credit card debt held by families increased 315 percent (García 2007). In the 12 years between 1983 and 1995, the proportion of low-income households with a credit card doubled, and the average balance on their cards increased by a factor of 3.8 (Sullivan 2008).

Despite increases in credit, research suggests that families pay down their credit card debt when they receive a predictable increase in income. Two studies of high-income families report that 10–20 percent of an expected increase in income is used to decrease total debt (Flavin 1991; Alessie and Lusardi 1997; Sullivan 2008). Examining reduction of credit card debt in lower-income households, Smeeding and colleagues (2000) report that just 18 percent of EITC-receiving respondents with credit card debt listed paying off this debt as a priority use of their refund. Unfortunately, the research does not report respondents' actual allocations, so the amount of debt that households paid off is unclear. Looking at actual allocations, H. Luke Shaefer and colleagues (2011) find that low-income single mothers receiving the EITC during periods of the credit's expansion (early 1990s) used the EITC to pay down total debt and, more specifically, such unsecured debt as that from credit cards. Using a standard difference-in-difference statistical approach, they find that single mothers receiving the EITC had $2,796 less in unsecured debt following

the EITC expansion than did unmarried women without children. These findings are similar to those in the study by Gao and colleagues (2009). Shaefer and colleagues (2011) argue that using more of the refund to pay back debt than to accumulate assets may help households to maintain financial stability and maximize utility (i.e., obtain the most benefits) when managing their stretched budgets.

Asset Building

The behavioral life-cycle hypothesis posits that saving money is challenging and requires substantial self-control (Shefrin and Thaler 1988; Beverly, McBride, and Schreiner 2003). It thus hypothesizes that individuals engage in several types of behaviors to increase their chances of building assets. These behaviors include (1) limiting the loans one takes out, (2) carrying no balance from month to month, and (3) paying off credit card debt. Research shows that low-income families also develop strategies to enhance self-control so as to foster asset building (Beverly et al. 2003). One ethnographic study finds that, in the years when families could choose whether to receive the EITC in a lump sum or in small amounts during the year, they often explicitly chose the lump payment because doing so served as a mechanism for forced savings (Romich and Weisner 2000). The study also suggests that choosing the lump sum increased their flexibility in managing stretched budgets; respondents report using the EITC to prepay such bills as rent and child care. Other possible asset-building strategies involve waiting to cash checks, refusing an ATM card to avoid easy access to money, keeping money in a bank that is not close to one's home, having a savings account that charges a fee to withdraw money, and asking family or friends to keep one's money so that it cannot be spent (Romich and Weisner 2000; Beverly et al. 2003).

In addition, a proposition of the behavioral life-cycle hypothesis is that families use systems of mental accounting to earmark income for spending or asset building. Survey and ethnographic data show that families usually earmark income for asset building when it is "irregular" and large (Beverly et al. 2003, 146). Examining data from 298 low-income participants, Sondra Beverly and colleagues (2003) acknowledge that the process of asset accumulation is complex; they argue that economic models should consider psychological and behavioral strategies that families use to live within their means and increase savings.[4] Smeeding and colleagues (2000) find that households that expect an EITC refund have a higher probability of using the refund for such economic and social-mobility purposes as education, cars, savings, and moving than do households that did not expect a refund.

4. See Souleles (1999) and Thaler (1990) for additional findings that appear to be inconsistent with the life-cycle model.

One important motivation for increasing savings is that it is thought to provide protection against unexpected shocks. Households often develop precautionary savings, and Marco Cagetti (2003) finds that such savings explain a large amount of the wealth of the median household in his study. Another study of wealthy households finds that 30 percent of an expected increase in income is saved (Sullivan 2008). Research further suggests that accumulating precautionary savings remains an important motive for households across the life span. Econometric simulations by Christopher Carroll and Andrew Samwick (1998, 417) "suggest that approximately 45% of total net worth, half of nonhousing, nonbusiness wealth, and about one-third of very liquid assets of households younger than age 50 are held as a precaution against the systematically greater uncertainty that some households face as compared with others." In addition to precautionary savings, younger households are also motivated to save for a home and their children's education compared to households closer to retirement (Cagetti 2003).

More research is needed on the motives driving EITC households' consumption and asset-building behaviors (Gao et al. 2009). The current study is one of a few that capture such motivations, inconsistencies between planned and actual allocations, and the processes driving these differences. Employing a unique mixed-methods research design, the study spans over 6 months and two geographical regions. Its sample varies by race, ethnicity, and marital status. This unique design allows the researchers to pose the following questions: How do households' plans to spend their tax refund match with their actual allocations of the refund? What events, emergencies, motivations, and microlevel decision processes create these discrepancies between planned and actual allocations? How much of the refund are these low- and moderate-income households able to devote to asset building? Can they sustain long-term savings?

Research Methods

Beginning in late January 2007, the authors visited selected nonprofit (called Volunteer Tax Assistance Sites) and for-profit tax-preparation sites at random sampling intervals, inviting all those who filed an Earned Income Credit (EIC) schedule to participate in a short survey that focuses on planned uses of their refund.[5] To represent some of the range of living costs that EITC recipients face across the United States, the researchers fielded the study in two locations: Boston and central Illinois (the Champaign-Urbana metro area). Within each city, the sample is stratified by household

5. The survey is similar to the one used by Smeeding and his collaborators (2000) but was designed in collaboration with the Boston EITC Campaign, an annual effort by the mayor's office. The campaign administers an annual survey of this kind in all Boston nonprofit tax-preparation sites. The EIC schedule is the tax form used to claim the EITC. Also, the terms EITC and EIC are used interchangeably.

type and race or ethnicity. These data are not representative of the national population of EITC claimants but do capture the circumstances of EITC claimants in two locations with heterogeneous characteristics.

Study Procedures for Survey

The researchers used tract-level census data to select the tax-preparation sites for this study. Selections are based on the racial, ethnic, and economic composition of the neighborhoods the sites serve. The researchers also sampled households at area Head Start centers shortly after the tax-filing deadline (April 15, 2007). These households are included to insure that the study captures some respondents who prepared their own tax returns, as roughly 30 percent of all EITC filers do not use either type of tax preparer (Rhine et al. 2006; Center for Economic Progress 2007). The selection of Head Start centers also is based on the racial and ethnic composition of their host communities. Table 1 describes the method for collecting data on both planned allocations and actual allocations. The table also describes the type of data collected and the sample sizes. A total of 657 households completed the surveys, and 194 households are represented in the qualitative component of the study.

Households are first screened for whether their tax filers submitted an EIC schedule in the 2007 filing of the return for the 2006 tax year. If the filer did so, the survey asks whether the household expected a refund of $1,000 or more and how they planned to allocate it. The planned allocation survey question asks, "If you get a refund this year, what do you plan to do with it?" It then asks respondents to rank the four most important items provided on the list (the most important item is assigned a rank of 1). The list includes such concerns as buy groceries, pay old taxes, buy a home, buy a car, pay back debt, and save. The questions seek more detail on savings plans than on other types of planned allocations, asking whether the household planned to save, what portion of the refund they planned to save, and what purposes they would save for. Because most respondents filed their taxes shortly before the survey, they could refer to the actual returns to see whether they filed an EIC schedule and to provide the estimated amount of their refund. As respondents do not typically know what portion of their refund comes from the EITC and cannot distinguish the EITC portion from the portions tied to such other sources as the Child Tax Credit, the survey asks them to report the total refund amount claimed on their tax return.

Study Procedures for Interviews

The researchers requested consent for further contact from all EITC claimants who reported having dependent children and who expected a refund of at least $1,000. An intensive qualitative study of the EITC

Table 1

EITC Data Collection

Method	Planned Allocations	Initial Actual Allocations	Amount Left in Savings after 6 Mos.
Method of data collection	Surveys, avg. 10 minutes	In-depth interviews, avg. 2.5 hours	In-depth interviews, avg. 2.5 hours
Time period and site of data collection	January–April 2007: nonprofit and for-profit tax preparation sites April 2007: Head Start centers	Interviews occurred in their homes (90%) or public locations (10%) on avg. 6 mos. after survey of households	Interviews occurred in their homes (90%) or public locations (10%) on avg. 6 mos. after survey of households
Type of data collected	Plans to spend the refund, plans to save refund, amount of refund, household status, race or ethnicity, how EITC helps them achieve their expenditure plans	Actual spending of refund, amount saved, financial goals, knowledge, and behavior; income and expenditures (monthly and after the refund), work life, housing and neighborhood, and family background	Original amount of tax refund saved, amount of saved refund spent, what spent savings on, amount still in savings
Sample size	657 households: 325 in Champaign-Urbana, IL, and 332 in Boston	194 households: 79 in Champaign-Urbana and 115 in Boston	76 households: 30 in Champaign-Urbana and 46 in Boston
		200 households interviewed but six were ineligible due to a refund of less than $1,000 or to EITC ineligibility	Initially saved some of their tax refund (These households are part of the 194 sample)

Note.— avg. = average; EITC = Earned Income Tax Credit; mos. = months.

allocations began approximately 6 months after the collection of the survey data by selecting a stratified random subsample (by city, race, marital status, and ethnicity). Drawn from the larger sample of 657, this qualitative subsample includes those who claimed a refund of at least $1,000. Imposing this threshold insures that study participants have some opportunity for meaningful asset building through their tax refund.

In Boston, the researchers randomly selected equal numbers of black, Latino, and white households. In Champaign-Urbana, even shares of black and white households are included because the number of Latino households is prohibitively small. The interview sample also is stratified by family structure. Within each city and racial or ethnic subgroup, the researchers sought to insure that two-thirds of the interview sample filed as single household heads and that one-third filed as married. The proportion that filed as married is roughly equivalent to the proportion of married households among those with children receiving the EITC. The researchers asked respondents for referrals in order to recruit an adequate number of married couples. Also, research staff in Champaign-Urbana used flyers and online advertisements to recruit white married couples. The goal of these recruiting efforts was to generate at least 45 survey respondents in each cell (e.g., black, single-parent households in Boston) and a total of 225 households. There are shortfalls in the number of survey respondents who are married and of those who are white; the research staff identified 216 potential households. It successfully recruited and interviewed 200 (see table 1).

Research staff conducted the interviews about 6 months after households received their refunds. Interviewers conducted in-depth, semistructured interviews in person with the household head or, in the case of married couples, with the parent in charge of the household's finances. The term "household" is used because the interview asked about all persons in the house, even if they are not related to the respondent. Over 90 percent of the interviews took place in respondents' homes; the remaining ones occurred in such public locations as cafés, parks, and libraries. The average interview length was 2 and a half hours, though the length ranges from 90 minutes to nearly 5 hours.

Each interview explored themes of planned and actual refund expenditure patterns as well as decision processes behind expenditure patterns. Interviews also examined how households use refunds to manage their budgets and plan for the future. Interview items include the following: Tell me about household finances; Tell me how you wanted to spend the refund money; Tell me the whole story of how you decided to spend X amount on (ITEM 1); Tell me the whole story of how you decided to spend X amount on (ITEM 2, 3, 4, etc.); How much of your refund is left? Where is it (bank, house, etc.)? Tell me how you plan to spend it; Do you have a savings plan? Interviewers also probed for motivations to pay off old bills: Some people that we've talked to have used some of their EITC to pay off

Table 2

RECRUITMENT EFFORTS AND METHOD OF FILING TAXES

Method	For-Profit Tax Centers	Nonprofit Tax Centers	Filed Own Taxes	Head Start Centers	Referrals	Online or Public Advertisement
Recruitment from (%)	36	20	NA	36	7	1
Filed taxes via (%)	62	24	14	NA	NA	NA

NOTE.—NA = Not applicable.

debt. How about you? Have you ever thought about using your EITC for something like that?

To avoid recall error in reports of actual allocations, interviewers brought copies of the households' initial survey and reminded the respondents of their planned uses for the refund. Researchers recorded, transcribed, and analyzed all interviews using standard qualitative coding techniques.

Study Sample

Overall, 36 percent of the intensive interview sample is drawn from for-profit tax sites, 20 percent come from nonprofit sites, and 36 percent come from Head Start centers (see table 2). Referrals account for 7 percent of the sample, and 1 percent comes from an online advertisement. The majority of respondents, nearly two-thirds (62 percent) of the sample, used a for-profit tax preparer to file their taxes; 24 percent relied on a nonprofit preparer, and 14 percent filed their own taxes or elicited the help of a family member or friend. Thus, the modes of filing in this interview sample somewhat underrepresent national EITC modes of filing; about 70 percent of EITC claimants across the nation submit their returns through for-profit filers, and nearly 30 percent of such claimants file their own returns or file by other methods. Filers who submit their return via nonprofit sites are overrepresented in the interview sample; nationally, 1–2 percent of EITC filers reportedly use such sites (Rhine et al. 2006; Center for Economic Progress 2007).

Response rates for both the survey and the intensive interviews are high.[6] In the survey phase, the response rate is estimated to exceed 95 per-

6. Precise rates are difficult to calculate for the survey; when approached at a tax preparation site, potential respondents could decline to participate either because they did not get the credit or because they did not want to take part in the study. However, the offer of $10 for 2 -3 minutes of respondents' time generated great enthusiasm at all sites. The only potential participants who said they filed an EIC schedule but declined to fill out the short survey were a few who were there to pick up their refund check and said they could not take the time because they were double parked or had a taxi waiting outside. Of those who indicated that they applied for the credit, nearly all agreed to fill out the short survey. Participation among parents of Head Start children is estimated to be nearly universal.

cent. Of those selected to participate in the in-depth interview, all but seven agreed in Champaign-Urbana and all but nine agreed in Boston. The reported response rate for the in-depth interview phase does not include the households (about 15) that the research staff could not contact because they moved. Also, interviews revealed that six households did not receive the EITC or did not have a large enough refund and so are excluded because they do not meet the study's eligibility criteria. Thus, the final analytical sample is composed of 194 households (see table 3 for sample demographics).

The sample is diverse. As table 3 indicates, black households represent 35 percent of the Boston sample and 58 percent of the Champaign-Urbana sample. White households make up 35 percent of households interviewed in Boston and 42 percent of those in Champaign-Urbana. Latino households comprise 30 percent of the Boston sample but were not interviewed in Champaign-Urbana because the number of such households there is small. Married households reportedly represent 39 percent of the Boston sample and 43 percent of the Champaign-Urbana sample. On average, households in both cities report having two children. Most sampled households in Boston indicate that they live in public or subsidized housing (60 percent). Only 10 percent reportedly own their homes. Housing status in Champaign-Urbana is more diverse than in Boston; the largest group of households (44 percent) reportedly rents at the fair market value, 18 percent say that they live in public or subsidized housing, and 20 percent tell researchers that they own their homes. About half of respondents in both cities indicate that they work full-time; 17 percent of households in the Boston sample and 25 percent of Champaign-Urbana households reportedly combine full- and part-time work. Ten percent of Boston households report that they received cash welfare assistance at the time of the interview, and 1 percent of Champaign-Urbana households report this. Most of the households (over 80 percent) in both cities report having a bank account at the time of the interview and that they had one at some time in the past (ever banked).

Data Analysis

Data from these interviews are used to document recipients' reports on how they allocate the credit. For analysis, allocations are organized into three categories: asset building, current consumption, and bills and debt. The asset-building category includes allocations for the following: initial savings (any type of savings at the time of the interview), education and home purchases or improvements. The second category is current consumption, which includes allocations for shopping, groceries, child expenses, car purchases or repairs, vacations, and other expenses such as furniture or appliances and family obligations. The third category is bills and debt,

Table 3

DEMOGRAPHICS OF SAMPLE

DEMOGRAPHIC	BOSTON		CHAMPAIGN-URBANA	
	Proportion	SE	Proportion	SE
Race or ethnicity:				
Black	.35	.04	.58	.06
White	.35	.04	.42	.06
Latino	.30	.04		
Married	.39	.05	.43	.06
Mean no. of children	2.46	.13	2.46	.16
Housing status:				
Own	.10	.03	.20	.05
Rent-to-own	.02	.01	.03	.02
Rent	.18	.04	.44	.06
Public or subsidized housing	.60	.05	.18	.04
Other (e.g., live with others)	.10	.03	.15	.04
Work status:				
Full-time	.47	.05	.49	.06
Part-time	.36	.05	.26	.05
Combined full- and part-time	.17	.04	.25	.05
Education:				
Less than high school	.14	.03	.04	.02
High school or GED	.14	.03	.22	.05
Some college	.35	.05	.30	.05
Associate's degree	.25	.04	.35	.06
Bachelor's degree	.11	.03	.07	.03
Post-bachelor's degree	.01	.01	.07	.03
Welfare status:				
Receiving at time of interview	.10	.03	.01	.01
Ever received	.63	.05	.29	.02
Immigrant	.35	.04	.05	.02
Banking:				
Banked at time of interview	.86	.03	.82	.04
Ever banked	.98	.01	1.00	.01
Total back debt ($)	7,506	1,106	11,408	3,279
Tax refund ($)	4,686	162	3,640	181
Annual household earnings ($)	24,281	1,421	21,672	1,671
Annual household earnings and government assistance ($)	27,781	1,339	25,570	1,551
Sample size	115		79	

NOTE.—GED = general equivalency diploma. Government assistance includes cash welfare, SNAP, the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (commonly known as WIC), Supplemental Security Income, unemployment benefits, and assistance with housing and utilities.

which includes bills (e.g., rent, utilities), credit card debt, and other debt like informal and student loans.

Findings

The analysis examines how households plan to use tax refunds prior to their receipt. It also examines how households actually spend the tax refund after they receive it and the motives driving their financial choices.

Asking households about their microlevel decision-making processes provides new insight into how they use tax refunds to manage stretched budgets and plan for the future.

Allocations in the current consumption category (e.g., groceries and child expenses) are interpreted to indicate that the household used the tax refund to expand the pool of funds for covering such expenditures. Without additional data (e.g., on expenditures by these households in other time periods or by similar households not receiving refunds), it is not possible to speculate further about exactly what types of additional expenditures households made but would not have made without the refund. However, the refund probably allows households to reallocate regular income to current consumption, debt payment, and other expenditures. For example, households could substitute regular income for clothing purchases if they spend tax refund dollars for grocery purchases.[7]

Previous research (Edin and Lein 1997) leads the authors to conclude that, if the households in this study did not receive the tax refund, their low incomes would force them to use regular income to meet basic necessities and other obligations categorized here as current consumption, leaving little room for asset building. Therefore, a household's expenditure of a tax refund on asset building is interpreted here to represent a net change in that specific category of the household budget rather than in the specific stated allocations of tax refunds to current consumption or debt payment. A major finding is that these net changes in assets, changes prompted by EITC refunds, present households with opportunities to build assets. The authors lack sufficient information needed to calculate the precise share of the stated allocations that represent net changes in specific categories of the household budget and are due to tax refunds. However, the analysis of different categories of stated allocations is informative to the extent that allocations in some categories (specifically, asset building and bills and debts) are more likely to represent net changes than are allocations in others.

Planned Refund Allocations

Plans for asset building.—Data from the short survey that households completed during tax time reveal that, despite living on the economic

7. In theory, households collecting SNAP could receive benefits that are sufficiently high as to enable them to reduce the amount of regular income they spend on food. About 47 percent ($n = 78$) of the sample reports participation in SNAP. The authors calculate the difference between the monthly food expenditures and the SNAP benefits for each of the 78 households receiving those benefits. For the 21 households that report receiving SNAP and purchasing groceries with their refund, the estimated median difference between monthly food expenditures and SNAP benefits is $145. For the 57 remaining households that report receiving SNAP and not using the refund to buy groceries, the estimated median of the differences between SNAP and monthly food expenditures is $60. Thus, the authors conclude that most of these SNAP recipients have at least some ability to reduce the amount of regular income spent on food if they want to substitute tax refund dollars for regular income.

Table 4

PLANNED AND ACTUAL ALLOCATIONS OF TAX REFUND

	PLANNED ALLOCATIONS: % WHO SPEND IN CATEGORY	ACTUAL ALLOCATIONS	
		% Who Spent in Category	% of Total Refund Dollars Spent
Asset building:	68.90	47.42	19.07
Initial savings	57.00	39.18	15.09
Education	9.18	4.64	1.31
Home purchase or improvement	15.31	5.15	2.52
Other	1.02	1.03	.17
Current consumption:	65.82	88.66	45.59
Shopping	22.45	30.41	3.05
Groceries	19.39	28.35	2.65
Child expenses	23.47	61.34	9.63
Car purchase or repair	12.24	33.51	9.12
Vacation	11.22	12.89	3.07
Other	4.08	63.92	18.07
Furniture or appliances	. . .	28.87	7.58
Family obligation	. . .	24.74	5.32
Bills and debt:	71.94	84.02	35.78
Bills	68.37	78.86	25.53
Credit card debt	. . .	22.16	5.55
Other debt	26.02	11.86	4.69

NOTE.—Planned allocations are measured at the time respondents filed their taxes. Respondents are asked what they plan to spend their refund on in the future. Actual allocations are measured at the time of the 6-month follow-up interview. Respondents are asked what they actually did with their refund once they received it. Percentages add up to greater than 100 percent in the percent spent category because respondents may spend in more than one category.

edge, a substantial number of EITC recipients have savings plans; 57 percent report that they planned to save some portion of their refund (see initial savings, table 4; see also table A1). Nearly a quarter (23 percent) intended to save more than a quarter of their refund, and half of these (12 percent of the total) anticipated saving more than 50 percent (results not shown).

Households also report other plans for asset accumulation, including plans to spend on education-related expenses (9 percent). Fifteen percent of sampled households report that they intended to spend a portion of their refund on a down payment for a home or on home improvement projects to increase the value of their property. Thus, many respondents identify substantial plans to accumulate assets. Champaign-Urbana households are estimated to be statistically significantly more likely than their Boston counterparts to plan to accumulate assets—63 percent versus 31 percent, respectively ($p < .0001$; estimates not shown). These findings may reflect the lower cost of living in Champaign-Urbana than in Boston. These survey findings reflect a major theme in the data from the in-depth qualitative interviews: respondents who anticipated a large tax

refund over multiple years often voice a strong sense of future-orientation and concrete plans to build assets, especially plans for the purchase of a home. Households discussed asset plans for multiple years beyond the year of the interview.

Plans to pay bills and debt.—Data from the short surveys also suggest that almost three-fourths (72 percent) of households reportedly planned to allocate their refunds to paying bills and reducing debt, and more households report plans to allocate refunds to this category than to either of the others (see table 4). A majority of these households (68 percent) report wanting to pay bills (e.g., for utilities) with some portion of their refund. Over a quarter (26 percent) indicate that the tax refund provides an opportunity to pay down or pay off debt like taxes and student loans. They also say that they view tax time as a point in the year when they can anticipate catching up on back bills. Households indicate that they derive a palpable sense of relief from the ability to use the refund to manage their stretched budgets and catch up on obligations. Just as Champaign-Urbana households are estimated to be statistically significantly more likely than their Boston counterparts to plan to accumulate assets, they also are estimated to be more likely to plan to spend some of the refund on debt reduction; 79 percent of Champaign-Urbana respondents planned this, but 67 percent of Boston respondents did so ($p < .05$; estimates not shown).

Plans for current consumption.—Current consumption represents the second-largest category of planned refund allocations. Close to one-quarter (22 percent) of households say that they planned to spend part of the refund on shopping, usually for clothing and other small household items (see table 4). About the same proportion of households say they would spend some of their refund on child expenses. The survey data suggest that nearly a quarter (22 percent) of households planned to allocate some of the refund dollars to buy a car, repair a car (12 percent for both), or save to buy a car (10 percent). Almost a fifth (19 percent) of households report planning to buy groceries with the refund. This is an early indication that many of the households live on the economic edge and have trouble covering basic necessities from month to month.

Actual Refund Allocations

Allocations for asset building.—Despite the economic precariousness of households in this sample, the majority (69 percent) report that they planned to invest some of their refund in one of the asset-building categories. The interview data reveal that almost half (47 percent) of the households actually allocate some of the refund for asset building.[8] At the

8. Means-tested income-transfer programs have liquid asset tests. For example, a family without special circumstances faces has a SNAP asset limit of $2,000 (US General Services Administration 2011). Although transfer-program asset limits did not come up during dis-

time of the survey, 9 percent of households indicated that they planned to use some of their refund for educational purposes. However, of those who reportedly planned to do so, only about a half of the households (5 percent) state in the interview that they actually allocated a portion of the refund for this purpose (see table 4).

What happened to households' asset-building plans? Lucy, a Puerto Rican mother of two who lives with her partner in Boston, reports that concern for the health of her newborn daughter motivated her to use part of her refund to move to an apartment that is not infested by roaches and rats.[9] Lucy's planned educational allocations changed, but Jessica's did not. Jessica, a Cuban mother in Boston, reports that she used some of her refund to pay down a substantial portion ($1,200) of her $4,000 student loan debt. She indicates that this was the third year she did so. Jessica illustrates that households base multiyear social mobility plans on expectations for future EITC receipt.

Home purchase or home improvement is listed as a planned allocation by 15 percent of the sample, yet only one-third of that number (5 percent of the sample) report that they actually used the refund for those purposes, and the interview data also provide some indication why so few are estimated to achieve this goal. Four households report that they saved money and obtained a preapproved loan from the bank but could not find an affordable home in a good neighborhood.

At the time of interview, Tina (white) and José (Puerto Rican) lived in a mixed-race housing project in Boston with their three children. They said that, after 10 years of marriage, they believed that they could afford to purchase a home. They limited expenses by living without cable television and a home telephone line so that they could save their refund and buy a house. José held two jobs; he stocked shelves for 40 hours a week at a large chain-electronics store and made donuts at a bakery on the 2–7 a.m. shift 3 days a week. Tina worked 1 day a week as a caterer. The couple saved their entire $4,000 tax refund and started hunting for a house. They soon learned that the only homes in their price range are in the solidly black sections of the city. Crime and violence in those neighborhoods were similar to the levels in their public housing community. They indicate that the search prompted them to revise their plan, and they hope that Tina will be able to return to work after the youngest child starts school. They say that the extra income from Tina will help them to become "rich enough" to qualify for a home purchase in the "right" area. Meanwhile, they spent some of their refund at a discount retailer to replenish their children's clothing and saved the rest.

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cussions with interviewees about the factors influencing households' saving and spending, means testing may well be a factor in asset building.

9. The authors use pseudonyms to protect the identity of participants. This is the first mention of Lucy. She is also mentioned below in the subsection *Use of Refund in Stretched Budgets and Future Planning.*

Table 5

How Respondents Used Saved Refund Dollars after 6 Months

	% Who Spent in Category	% of Total Refund Dollars Spent
Initial savings:		
Spent on mobility	3.09	1.19
Spent on extras and treats	3.61	.39
Spent on regular bills and monthly expenses	15.98	4.94
Spent on unanticipated expenses and emergencies	7.22	2.35
Still in savings	20.62	6.23
Total initial savings	39.18	15.09

Note.—This table describes how households actually spend the initial savings identified in table 4. Savings include money stored in savings and checking accounts as well as with family members.

The largest percentage of respondents who planned allocations to asset building reportedly planned to direct them to savings. Compared to the 57 percent of households that planned to save some of their refund, 39 percent (or 18 percent less than planned) report that they actually allocated some portion of the refund to initial savings (see table 4). The amount of initial savings by these households represents 15 percent of the total refund dollars ($637 on average). By the time of the in-depth interviews 6 months later, household savings decreased by roughly half (to just 6 percent).

Where did the savings go? How much of it did households allocate as precautionary savings but spend when an exigent need arose? Data from the interviews suggest that households spent 1 percent of initial savings on social mobility items like education, home purchase, or home improvement) and another 5 percent on regular bills and monthly expenses. Households initially saved 15.09 percent of the total refund dollars (see table 4); when interviewed 6 months later, they reported that the amount decreased by 9 percent to just over 6 percent (see table 5; also see table A2). Table 5 also has information on how households spent their initial savings after the 6 months. Of the 9 percent of the total refund that households initially saved but spent, close to one-quarter (2.35 percent) reportedly covered unanticipated expenses and emergencies (e.g., a car repair or layoff; see table 5). Table 6 reallocates refund dollars shown in table 4 to show how respondents ultimately used their refunds after spending their initial savings.

Spending down refund money that households initially saved to cover unanticipated expenses and emergencies appears to reflect a precautionary savings approach. In the survey, 22 percent (data not shown) report that they planned to save for unanticipated expenses and emergencies. It is difficult to tell whether precautionary savings accumulate continually

Table 6

PLANNED AND ACTUAL ALLOCATIONS OF TAX REFUND AFTER 6 MONTHS

	PLANNED ALLOCATIONS: % WHO SPEND IN CATEGORY	ACTUAL ALLOCATIONS	
		% Who Spent In Category	% of Total Refund Dollars Spent
Asset building:	68.90	29.90	11.01
Savings	57.00	19.59	6.01
Education	9.18	5.15	1.44
Home purchase or improvement	15.31	6.19	3.18
Other	1.02	1.55	.38
Current consumption:	65.82	91.75	50.11
Shopping	22.45	31.96	3.52
Groceries	19.39	33.51	3.46
Child expenses	23.47	62.89	10.16
Car purchase or repair	12.24	35.05	10.27
Vacation	11.22	12.89	3.06
Other	4.08	65.98	19.63
Furniture or appliances	. . .	29.38	7.62
Family obligation	. . .	25.26	5.94
Bills and debt:	71.94	88.66	38.88
Bills	68.37	84.02	29.06
Credit card debt	. . .	22.16	5.55
Other debt	26.02	11.86	4.69

NOTE.—Planned allocations measured at the time the respondents filed their taxes. Respondents are asked what they plan to spend their refund on in the future. Actual allocations are measured at the time of the 6-month follow-up interview. Respondents are asked what they actually did with their refund once they received it. Percentages add up to greater than 100 percent in the percent spent category because respondents may spend in more than one category.

or through one-time events like the EITC refund. Most households report that they can only save when they receive their tax refund. However, data on households' monthly budget suggest that 10 percent of the sample reports savings unrelated to their tax refund. The accumulated savings of this subsample ranges from $107 to $11,201; the mean is $1,797 (median is $575). Also, many households indicate that the lump sum nature of the EITC payment leads them to view the credit as a form of saving and to believe that they engage in savings behavior merely by being eligible for the program.

LeAnn, who lived with her child's father, says that she pays close attention to her withholding so as to maximize her tax refund. This white mother of a 4-year-old son also raises a 12-year-old stepson. She works as a secretary and elects to have more withheld from her paycheck than is due so that her refund will be substantial at the end of the tax year. She explains: "I just do it because it will be there in the end in bulk instead of every week. What's $20, you know? And at the end of the year, it's like $800." Similarly, most EITC households prefer the lump sum payment, but how do they make decisions about paying bills and debt that accumulate over the year?

Allocations for paying off bills and debt.—As results in table 4 suggest, almost three-quarters (72 percent) of the sample reports plans to spend a portion of the refund to catch up on or prepay such obligations as bills, credit cards, and other debt. In actual allocation, households exceed this; 84 percent (an additional 12 percent) are estimated to spend a portion of their refund on such obligations. This can be explained in part by respondents' laments that debt is a barrier to asset accumulation, so they sometimes prioritize debt payment over asset building. The estimates suggest that over one-third (36 percent) of total refund dollars are allocated to pay down or prepay debts and bills (see table 4). Shaefer and colleagues (2011) argue that, by prioritizing in this way, households maximize benefit from their stretched budgets and maintain financial stability.

During the interview, 124 households (64 percent of the sample) reported having credit cards and 109 households reported having credit card debt. The average known debt across all of the cards for a sampled household is estimated to be $3,698 (median is $1,000).[10] Such debt ranges from $0 to $52,000. In 2004, the average debt for US families with credit cards was $5,219 (García 2007). José García (2007) reports that, for families making between $10,000 and $24,999, the average debt was $3,378. This implies that credit card debt in the current sample is similar to that for low-income families across the nation.

Of the EITC households that provided information about the interest rate on their credit cards, about 42 percent cited specific rates that range from zero to 30 percent.[11] The average interest rate on credit card debt is reported to be 14 percent, and the median rate is 16.5 percent. The data suggest that sampled households understand how they are affected by high interest rates and are motivated to reduce credit card debt. For example, 22 percent of the total sample (or 39 percent of those with credit debt) reportedly used their refund to pay down credit card debt (see table 4).[12] On average, sampled households' refunds are reportedly used to pay 22 percent (median is 0 percent) of their total credit card debt. They spend an average of $394 (median is $0) from the refund to pay off debt. The range of refund dollars spent on credit card debt is estimated to span from zero to $4,000. The authors estimate that 18 sampled households paid off all of their credit card debt with their

10. Credit card debt information is lacking for 6 percent ($n = 12$) of the sample; two of the households were not asked about credit card debt, and the others did not provide enough information to calculate how much debt they have.

11. Credit card interest rates are lacking for 25 percent ($n = 48$) of the sample. Respondents in this group did not provide enough information to enable estimation of their rates. Many households report not knowing their interest rates. Another 31 households (16 percent) were not asked about credit card interest rates; in some cases, research staff forgot to ask the question.

12. The survey does not ask households how much of their refund they plan to allocate to credit card debt.

tax refunds and that six of those households closed their credit card accounts.[13]

Households demonstrate their financial literacy and knowledge of the true cost of high interest rates in their decision-making processes about which credit cards to pay off first with their scarce resources. When asked how she decides which credit cards to pay with the tax refund, Lindon, a white single mother living in Boston, replies, "Home Depot and some other stuff, there's no interest for the first year. Bernie and Fields is a high interest rate, so we paid that off first." Lindon and other respondents understand how to cut down the amount of interest paid so that they will have more money in their pockets over the long run. They appear to use high-interest credit cards because they live on the economic edge; using credit is one way to smooth their income and buffer against random negative shocks.

Households feel the cost of these credit cards and other debt when they want to build assets. Helen, a 30-year-old black single mother of three children, recollects an attempt to buy a house using a prior year's tax refund as a down payment: "When I tried to buy a house last time, my back debts were impacting me like right then and there. Another credit card bill was [a problem] and then probably the older [debts I owe]. Because at the time I thought to use my [refund] money for a down payment on a house. But I had to pay those things off in order to be evaluated [for a loan]." The stories illustrate the critical importance of debt reduction and the influence that concerns about debt exert as households consider the role of the EITC in their budgets and future social mobility.

Allocations for current consumption.—The current consumption category is another major area of expenditure; as results in table 4 suggest, 66 percent of households reportedly planned to use some of their refund for items in this area. More households (89 percent or 23 percent more) are estimated to actually spend part of the tax refund on current consumption than planned to do so. For example, 19 percent of households reportedly planned to purchase groceries with their refund, but estimates indicate that 28 percent actually did so. Again, this may suggest that households on the economic edge use the tax refund to manage their stretched budgets.

The difference between planned child expenses and actual expenses is almost threefold; 24 percent say that they planned to spend a portion of the refund on such expenses, but 61 percent report that they actually did so. Why is there such a difference? Many households indicate that some of the leftover money should go to the kids once other urgent needs are covered; some even say that they owe their children these treats because the credit was their money. Barbara, a white mother of two daughters, says

13. The authors are unable to calculate whether households paid off one or more cards and whether they left debt on other cards. The data only allow the study to calculate whether they paid all of the credit card debt known to the authors.

that she spent some of her money with this in mind: "Yeah. You see, my thing is, the Earned Income Credit, that's not my money. I have children. I have to take care of them. I chose to have them. That is their money. I wouldn't get that if I didn't have them."

Another threefold difference between planned and actual refund allocations can be observed in the category for car purchases and repairs. Just 12 percent of sampled households reportedly planned to spend money in this area, but 34 percent (21 percent more than planned) are estimated to actually allocate part of the refund for this purpose. The interview data suggest that this reflects household members' lives on the economic edge. Many respondents drive used cars, which can frequently require unexpected repairs. A properly running car is especially important for respondents who drop children off before work, travel some distance to work, or attend school. Respondents in Champaign-Urbana are estimated to spend statistically significantly more of their tax refund on car purchases and repairs than do sample members in Boston, 44 percent versus 26 percent ($p < .01$; results not shown). It is important to note that Champaign-Urbana is a much smaller urban area than Boston but that public transportation is less accessible there.

Wendy, a 34-year-old mother of two boys in Champaign-Urbana, reports that she used the refund, about $6,000, to pay $500 in overdue bills and then put $250 in each of her boys' saving accounts. She works the night shift in a factory so that she can be available to her children in the afternoons and attend their school activities. Wendy used the rest of her refund to purchase a used car outright. She notes that her mother wanted her to save the money, but Wendy held fast to her plan:

> My mom was like, "Okay, well save." [I was already] saving money all through the year from my checks—I was putting like $25 away—but always "emergencies" coming and I was dipping in—end up dipping in. I was like, I told my mom, "This is what I'm going to do with my income tax money—if I get this amount of money, this is what I'm going to do. . . . I have to have a car 'cause I have to take my boys to practice, and I have a lot of events to do. This is what I want and this is my plan." And I did it!

Wendy's story illustrates how some households manage to put away money here and there but have trouble letting it accumulate for big purchases. Thus, the lump sum tax refund plays an important role in the budget of EITC households.

No data are available on the households' plans to use the refund to repay family obligations, but 25 percent report that they used some of the refund for this purpose. Sampled households are often nested within kin and friendship networks characterized by a good deal of economic volatility. Households say that they depend on these networks in hard times, and tax refund season is typically the best time in their annual budget cycles to reconcile loans (Sykes, Kriz, and Edin 2012). Larry, a white father of three, works as a janitor and sometimes drives a delivery truck for extra

money. He received a refund of $7,500. Before allocating the credit to anything else, he cleared up a $2,000 debt to his brother. "When we're in a pinch and he helps [and] loans us money," Larry explains, he intentionally prioritizes repaying the debt to his brother over paying off other debt. Perhaps Larry's story demonstrates how households preserve their credit within their networks and use it to buffer income shocks without having to pay high interest rates on commercial loans of thousands of dollars.

Use of Refund in Stretched Budgets and Future Planning

In the interviews, households are asked to share future goals and to explain why they prioritize spending their tax refund the way they do. They also are asked to describe what they imagine their lives will be like in 5 years and 10 years. Responses to these questions provide critical insight into the role of the tax refund in households' stretched budgets and future plans for social mobility.

The majority of sampled households discuss having stretched budgets. They indicate that receipt of the EITC allows them to buy clothing for growing children or to purchase large quantities of food on sale and freeze it. Lucy's story (mentioned above) demonstrates how households can use the refund to improve their housing situation and protect the health of vulnerable household members. She reportedly used half of the refund to pay overdue bills and wanted to use the other half to pay off her educational debt, which totaled $5,000. Instead, she decided to use the rest of the money to move to a newly renovated two-bedroom unit just down the street. Lucy indicates that she and her partner saw the move as necessary because pest infestation and lead paint posed dangers for her newborn. The EITC allowed them the flexibility to choose what was best for their household. The interviews indicate that a large number of respondents have multiyear asset-building plans.[14] This and other data suggest that anticipation of future refunds over multiple years is associated with a strong sense of future orientation.[15] Interestingly, most households indicate that they assume that the EITC is the primary savings vehicle through which they will accomplish these plans. This assumption may persist because few anticipate substantial gains in earnings. The large majority of respondents who anticipate multiyear EITC receipt speak eloquently about their dreams for social mobility. They share the belief that their dreams are possible (at least if pursued over several years) because

14. The authors estimate that around one-quarter of the sample had multiyear asset-building plans. An example of a multiyear asset-building plan is when a household plans to use the refund one year to pay down their debt to improve their credit score. The next year, they plan to save the refund or use it to buy a house or go to school.

15. Evidence suggests that actual receipt differs from expectations. More than half of a sample that received the EITC in 2000 did not receive the credit 6 years later; some earned too much income to qualify, and others dropped out of the labor force (Ackerman, Holtzblatt, and Masken 2009).

they receive the tax credit annually. Most say that they plan on pursuing these goals sequentially. They first repay debt to clean up credit histories and improve their credit rating. They then save for a big item, like their own home.

Discussion

This article uses a mixed-methods approach to advance the literature on the EITC by providing new insights in three key areas. First, the limited literature on households' EITC allocations suggests that households sometimes purchase big-ticket items but that much of the credit may be devoted to current consumption and debt repayment, rather than to asset accumulation (Beverly et al. 2005). To date, however, there are few fine-grained analyses of the microlevel decision-making processes and contextual factors that underlie these allocations. Such information is critical for development of promising policies to decrease the share of the EITC that is allocated to current consumption and to increase the portion allocated to boost household assets and savings. This information could be useful to policy makers and practitioners who seek to encourage asset building among the poor as a long-term antipoverty strategy.

The mixed-methods approach nicely demonstrates how households with a sizable credit ($1,000 and over) hope to use their refund and how they actually allocate the money. The results suggest that they sometimes use the credit in ways that differ from their original intentions. Because there is little direct evidence on how plans to use the refunds evolve, this study adds to the literature by providing detailed information on categories of allocation, the amounts spent in such categories, and the decision-making processes by which households develop spending priorities. It also contributes estimates of the extent to which recipients' allocations are representative of findings from prior research (e.g., Romich and Weisner 2000; Smeeding et al. 2000; Beverly et al. 2005; Spader et al. 2005; Rhine et al. 2006).

The study identifies ways in which the spending categories may be shaped by the unique contexts of Boston and Champaign-Urbana. Champaign-Urbana households are estimated to be statistically significantly more likely to say they plan to spend their EITC on asset building and debt repayment. This may reflect the advantages associated with residing in an area where the cost of living is low. Champaign-Urbana residents also are estimated to be twice as likely as Boston residents to own their homes (20 versus 10 percent respectively). In addition, Champaign-Urbana residents are statistically significantly more likely to spend a portion of their refund on car purchases and repairs. This type of spending may reflect the less urban nature of the Champaign-Urbana area.

Second, this study provides new information on the effect of the EITC on households' budgets and is one of only a few studies to demonstrate

that the EITC is more than a consumption-spreading transfer (Meyer and Holtz-Eakin 2001). The authors argue that the EITC is different from other types of income subsidies like child care and food stamps because it allows credit-constrained households to meet goals other than current consumption. The findings here suggest that households use the refund as a vehicle to pursue financial stability by paying down debt. They also suggest that households use it to pursue economic mobility by saving and creating multiyear goals. Another important contribution is the finding on precautionary savings. It suggests that EITC households deliberately set aside savings to buffer against uncertainty. Six months after the initial survey, 21 percent of interviewed households ($n = 41$) still have 6 percent (or $48,264) of the total refund amount for the sample ($804,400). Such funds can be used as a buffer against shocks.

Third, this study provides information on the high value that EITC households place on getting the refund in a lump sum during tax time. Households reportedly feel that they work for the benefit and are capable of deciding how best to spend the refund in light of their household's current needs and future goals. This study is one of only a few to highlight the ways that EITC recipients conceptualize the role of the refunds in budgeting and planning for the future. As such, it offers insight into why households prefer the lump sum over a monthly refund that can be used to pay obligations when they are due. The interview data suggest that households prefer the lump sum refund because it allows them to strategize more around their stretched budgets and provides some opportunity to meet their long-term social mobility goals.

This study, though only one of a handful of EITC studies that examine planned and actual allocations using survey and rich interview data, has some limitations and leaves some questions unanswered. First, the study uses a sample of 194 households in Boston and Champaign-Urbana. The authors' ability to generalize the findings to the national context is limited by the small sample size and by the unique contexts at the study sites. Both locations have major universities that influence the type of work and educational pathways available for EITC households. Nevertheless, Boston and Champaign-Urbana are important sites to study because residents in both areas have access to state EITC programs that add an additional 7.5 and 10 percent of the federal amount to households' budgets. Illinois's program is currently 7.5 percent of the federal EITC; it will increase to 10 percent in 2013 (Associated Press 2012). In Massachusetts the state EITC is 15 percent of the federal EITC (Massachusetts Department of Revenue 2012). Despite these limitations, the study offers new insight into the EITC's influence on households' ability to stretch tenuous budgets and plan for the future. The important unanswered policy question is, do households attain their multiyear asset accumulation goals? Future EITC research should include longitudinal data over several years to further ascertain barriers and pathways to using the EITC for social mobility.

Appendix

Table A1

CATEGORIES FOR TABLES 4 AND 6

	Planned Allocations	Actual Allocations
Asset building:		
Initial savings	Save for a rainy day, education, a home, or a car	Money in saving or checking account, informal savings, child savings accounts
Education	Pay for school (vocational school and college) student loans	Pay for school (vocational school and college) student loans
Home purchase or improvement	Buy a home or home improvement	Buy a home, purchase land, pay mortgage, purchase new windows, new furnace, etc.
Other	Moving expenses like renting a truck	Moving expenses like renting a truck
Current consumption:		
Shopping	Go shopping	Adult clothing, household items like curtains
Groceries	Buy groceries	Buying food, household cleaning supplies, etc.
Child expenses	Pay child expenses	Child clothing, child allowance, child games, day care, etc.
Car purchase or repair	Buy a car	Buy new car, purchasing brakes, transmission, etc.
Vacation	Go on vacation	Vacation
Other:	Nintendo Wii, etc.	Prescriptions, hair, pet expenses, tithes, residency paperwork, eating out, lottery, alcohol, wedding, court costs, etc.
Furniture or appliances	Did not ask on survey	Sofa, table and chairs, refrigerator, washing machine, computer, etc.
Family obligations	Did not ask on survey	Pay back family loans, help family members out
Bills and debt:		
Bills	Pay bills	Rent, phone (house and cell), heat, water, gas, electric, real estate taxes, homeowners' insurance, cable, internet, car payment, car insurance, medical debt, life insurance, tax preparation fee, etc.
Credit card debt	Did not ask on survey	Store and major credit cards
Other debt	Pay old taxes, pay back debts	Personal loans, debt owed to a storage company, government garnishing for loans

NOTE.—The survey items were less detailed than items in the follow-up interview and included terms like "go shopping," and "save for a home." The actual allocation items are derived from detailed budget information on monthly expenses.

Table A2

CATEGORIES FOR TABLE 5

Expenditure Categories	Examples of Expenditures
Initial savings:	
Spent on mobility	Education, home purchase, or home improvement
Spent on extra and treats	Eating out, gifts, entertainment, wedding, vacation, children's toys, other personal treats, etc.
Spent on regular bills and monthly expenses	Rent, phone (house and cell), heat, water, gas, electric, real estate taxes, homeowners' insurance, cable, internet, car payment, car insurance, medical debt, life insurance, tax preparation fee, etc.
Spent on unanticipated expenses and emergencies	Car repair, house repairs, layoff, medical bills, school expenses, etc.

Note

Ruby Mendenhall received her PhD in human development and social policy from Northwestern University. Her research focuses on issues of social inequality over the life course and the role of public policy and individuals' agency in facilitating social and economic mobility. She specifically researches segregation in urban communities and how families use the Earned Income Tax Credit to invest in mobility activities. **Kathryn Edin** received her PhD in sociology from Northwestern University. Her research focuses on urban poverty and family life, social welfare, housing policy, child support, nonmarital childbearing, and the economic lives of the poor. **Susan Crowley** currently is a project manager at the Center on the Developing Child at Harvard University. She works to foster innovative strategies that improve the healthy growth and development of vulnerable young children and ultimately decrease health and education disparities. It was her nursing experience working with low-income families in a variety of acute and community-based settings that piqued her interest in young families and the intersection of poverty, health, and education. She earned a master's degree in public administration degree at Harvard University's Kennedy School of Government. **Jennifer Sykes** received her PhD in sociology and social policy from Harvard University and is an assistant professor in the School of Public Policy at Oregon State University. Her research focuses on inequality and family well-being with a particular emphasis on child protection and poverty alleviation policy. She holds master's degrees from Harvard University and the University of York. **Laura Tach** received her PhD in sociology and social policy from Harvard University and is an assistant professor of public policy at Cornell University. Prior to starting at Cornell, Laura was a Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Health and Society Scholar at the University of Pennsylvania. Her research examines the contextual effects of poverty on child well-being and family life. She is involved in projects studying public housing demolitions and mixed-income housing, multiple-partner fertility and father involvement, and the Earned Income Tax Credit. **Katrin Kriz** is assistant professor of sociology at Emmanuel College. Kriz earned a PhD degree in sociology at Brandeis University and a master's degree in international develop-

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The Great Recession, Public Transfers, and Material Hardship

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Economic downturns lead to lost income and increased poverty. Although high unemployment almost certainly also increases material hardship and government transfers likely decrease hardship, the first relationship is not yet documented and the second is poorly understood. This study uses data from the Fragile Families and Child Wellbeing Study to examine the associations of unemployment, government transfers, and material hardship. The Fragile Families study collected the latest wave of data during the Great Recession, the worst recession since the Great Depression. The data provide a unique opportunity to examine how high unemployment affects the well-being of low-income families. This study finds that the unemployment rate is associated with increased overall material hardship, difficulty paying bills, having utilities disconnected, and increased usage of welfare, food stamps, unemployment insurance, and Medicaid. If not for food stamps, food hardship during the Great Recession might have increased by twice the amount actually observed.

The Great Recession that began in December 2007 and officially ended in June 2009 was the worst in the United States since the Great Depression (National Bureau of Economic Research 2010). Estimates from the Current Population Survey show that, among families in the lowest 10 percent of the income distribution, unemployment rates were as high as 31 percent in the period from October to December of 2009. In the second lowest income decile, unemployment was almost 20 percent (Sum and Khatiwada 2010). High unemployment rates are likely to influence the health and well-being of low-income families. In addition to lost in-

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come and increased poverty they face due to unemployment, low-income families are likely to experience other material hardships as a result of the economic downturn.

Research that focuses on material hardships generally looks at the relationship between poverty or income and the occurrence of hardship (Iceland and Bauman 2007; Sullivan, Turner, and Danziger 2008). This article focuses on the association between unemployment and material hardship. It uses data from the first five waves of the Fragile Families and Child Wellbeing Study (hereafter, Fragile Families). These data are uniquely suited to an examination of the effects of unemployment because the most recent period of data collection (May 2007 to February 2010) coincides with the Great Recession. To the authors' knowledge, this is the first article to examine the effect of the unemployment rate on material hardship, and it is one of the few studies able to exploit longitudinal data in order to control for many potential confounders.

The study examines the effect of the unemployment rate on a summary measure of material hardship and on a set of particular hardships, including food hardship, inability to pay bills, housing insecurity, unmet medical needs, and utilities cutoff. It also looks at the association between the unemployment rate and the use of several government transfer programs: the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), unemployment insurance (UI), Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), Medicaid, and public housing. Finally, it combines results from other studies of the effects of transfer programs on hardship (results that are not plagued by reverse causality) with the estimates of the effect of unemployment on hardship and transfer programs in the Fragile Families data. This produces an estimate of the hardship-mitigating effects of transfer programs during the Great Recession.

Prior Literature

Unemployment and Material Hardship

A large literature relates the business cycle to measures of economic well-being. Many studies focus specifically on the unemployment rate and poverty, on the unemployment rate and income inequality, or on the unemployment rate and family income (Blank and Blinder 1986; Blank 1989, 1993; Cutler and Katz 1991; Blank and Card 1993; Tobin 1994; Haveman and Schwabish 2000; Freeman 2001; Hoynes 2002; Gundersen and Ziliak 2004). These studies generally find that higher unemployment rates are associated with worse economic outcomes. For example, Rebecca Blank and David Card (1993) find that a rise in the unemployment rate is associated with an increase in the number of weeks unemployed as well as with decreases in the number of weeks employed, real average weekly earnings, and mean earnings. Despite the substantial literature on poverty and in-

come measures, few studies consider the effect of business cycle changes on material hardship.

Material hardship is a consumption-based indicator of economic well-being. It is designed to capture forms of forgone consumption that threaten health and well-being, such as going without food, housing, or needed medical care. An economics literature suggests that consumption-based indicators of economic well-being are superior to income-based measures (Citro and Michael 1995). Measures of income do not always fully capture all the resources that families have to make ends meet. In addition, other sources of income, such as government transfers, wealth, and the ability to draw on credit or free services, may also aid families in avoiding hardships. Measures of consumption are likely better than strict measures of income at capturing other sources of income. Besides capturing the effects of economic resources that income-based measures may miss, consumption-based alternatives, such as hardship measures, are also heuristically attractive because they assess concrete adversities. By evaluating families' living conditions, measures of material hardship can provide some perspective on what it means to be poor (Federman et al. 1996). Some researchers suggest that the general American public is more interested in understanding whether families can obtain basic necessities than in whether families have a certain level of income (Mayer and Jencks 1989; Rector, Johnson, and Youssef 1999; Heflin, Sandberg, and Rafail 2009). Bruce Meyer and James Sullivan (2003) also find that those who are income poor are not necessarily the same as those who are consumption poor. Few researchers advocate for the replacement of income or poverty measures with a material hardship measure, but many argue that material hardship is a useful complement to other tools for assessing economic well-being.

This study employs material hardship measures first used by Susan Mayer and Christopher Jencks (1989) in a study of Chicago residents. A number of surveys include similar measures of material hardship. Most notable among these is the Survey of Income and Program Participation conducted by the US Census Bureau. The Fragile Families study uses Survey of Income and Program Participation measures that are very similar to those collected by Mayer and Jencks.[1] Although material hardship measures have been used for 20 years, there is little agreement on how to operationalize them (Beverly 2001*a*; Ouellette et al. 2004; Short 2005; Heflin 2006; Carle, Bauman, and Short 2009: Heflin et al. 2009). Some researchers use an index of all material hardships; others look just at a specific hardship (e.g., phone disconnected), and some look at hardship domains, such as housing or food hardship. In addition, the number of measures varies greatly across studies of hardships (Rose, Parish,

1. A few additional questions from the Social Indicators Survey are also included.

and Yoo 2009). Despite these differences, most studies of material hardship cover four hardship domains: health, food, ability to pay bills, and housing. Studies that examine material hardship with the Fragile Families data use both individual and aggregate measures (Teitler, Reichman, and Nepomnyaschy 2004; Reichman, Teitler, and Curtis 2005; Nepomnyaschy and Garfinkel 2011; Schwartz-Soicher, Geller, and Garfinkel 2011; Osborne, Berger, and Magnuson 2012).

The current study includes a summary measure of material hardship as well as measures of material hardship domains. Summary (or index) measures can estimate the overall extent of material hardship experienced by a household. Because households can choose to allocate resources differently, one may choose to forgo food but another might forgo paying bills. An index measure captures an overall level of hardship but does not consider household preferences (Beverly 2001*b*). The current study also investigates hardship domains (sets of issues related to a specific type of hardship), as research finds that models examining domains of hardship are superior to those that examine fully disaggregated measures (Heflin et al. 2009). Research also suggests that measuring hardship domains can provide information on whether particular types of hardships are more strongly related to the unemployment rate than are other hardships. The domain measures are constructed to closely match prior studies that use the Fragile Families data (Heflin and Iceland 2009).

The authors expect that, as the unemployment rate increases, the incidence of material hardships will increase and some hardships will be more responsive to the unemployment rate than others. One might expect that some hardships (e.g., food hardship) will also be more responsive to proximal changes in unemployment, whereas others (e.g., housing hardship) will be more responsive to long-term changes in the unemployment rate. In the Fragile Families data, measures of hardship reflect any occurrence of the hardship over the prior 12 months; thus, the unemployment rates are constructed to match that time period.

Although no research considers the relationship between the unemployment rate and summary measures of material hardship, some studies investigate unemployment and specific types of material hardship. Food insecurity is found to be positively associated with trends in the unemployment rate, such that food insecurity increases as the unemployment rate rises (Nord, Andrews, and Carlson 2009). Studies generally find that housing affordability (i.e., ability to pay rent or mortgage) decreased during the Great Recession but that homelessness and crowding increased over the period (Sard 2009; DeCrappeo et al. 2010; Painter 2010; Sell et al. 2010). Although no studies examine the association between the unemployment rate and medical hardship, some research shows that child and adult health tends to improve or stay the same in recessionary periods (Ruhm 2000, 2005; Chay and Greenstone 2003; Dehejia and Lleras-

Muney 2004; Ferreira and Schady 2009). However, findings by Douglas Miller and colleagues (2009) suggest that gains in adult health are largely concentrated among the elderly and may reflect an increase in the amount of time that caregivers are available. No literature relates the unemployment rate to having utilities cut off or to bill hardships. The current study fills this gap by looking at the association of the unemployment rate with multiple measures of material hardship.

A related literature examines the association between individual employment or individual unemployment and material hardship (Conger and Elder 1994; Edin and Lien 1997; Elder 1999; Danziger et al. 2000; Bauman 2002; Moffitt and Cherlin 2002; Teitler et al. 2004; Lovell and Oh 2006). However, there are many reasons to expect such an association even in good economic times, as those who are unemployed may have other problems that cause both unemployment and material hardship. This study instead focuses on the unemployment rate, a measure that is not affected by the unobserved problems or choices of the individuals in the sample. In addition, the unemployment rate allows the analyses to get at shocks that affect the whole household, not just those that affect the employment of one particular member. Households (and particularly low-income households) often have multiple earners and a wide network of people who may help out in the event of an individual shock to employment or income. However, the whole network is likely to be affected by a shock as large as the Great Recession.

Unemployment and Government Transfers

For government transfers to mitigate the effect of unemployment increases on material hardship, the transfers must increase as unemployment increases. The authors anticipate that participation in entitlement programs (those that automatically expand as incomes fall), such UI and SNAP, will be positively associated with the unemployment rate; the authors expect that TANF and public housing will be less responsive than entitlement offerings.

The literature on the unemployment rate and government assistance programs suggests that many programs expand during recessionary periods but that not all do so. These studies mostly document trends in participation and the unemployment rate but cannot account for other characteristics associated with both unemployment and program participation (excepting Ziliak, Gundersen, and Figlio [2003] and Levy [2006]). This literature finds that SNAP expanded dramatically during the Great Recession (Nord et al. 2010) and that SNAP caseloads are generally related to unemployment (Hanson and Gundersen 2002; Ziliak et al. 2003). Because SNAP is an entitlement program, we expect that SNAP usage will be associated with the unemployment rate.

Use of UI also is posited to be related to the unemployment rate. The descriptive literature suggests that use of UI expanded dramatically during the Great Recession, as did the length of time an individual may claim benefits (Burtless 2009).

Cash transfers from TANF may help some families to avoid hardships; during the Great Recession, TANF caseloads rose in some states but remained flat or decreased in others (Pavetti and Rosenbaum 2010). Unlike the Aid to Families with Dependent Children before it, TANF is not an entitlement. Because of this, we are not sure whether caseloads expand in times of economic crisis.

Medicaid, another government program, may help families to avoid medical hardship. The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (123 Stat. 115) provides funding for Medicaid, and enrollment in the program increased during the Great Recession (Kaiser Family Foundation 2011). In analyses that adjust for demographic characteristics and focus on low-skill workers, Helen Levy (2006) finds that an increase in the unemployment rate is not associated with an increase in the use of public health insurance. Despite these findings, we expect to see growth in receipt of Medicaid as growth in the unemployment rate increases the number of families eligible to receive Medicaid.

Finally, public housing and Section 8 vouchers may help families to avoid housing hardships. The 2009 American Recovery and Reinvestment Act also provides funding for emergency housing assistance and programs to help families avoid foreclosure (Sell et al. 2010). The authors know of no study that documents an association between housing assistance and the unemployment rate. Because subsidies for low-income housing and the stock of public housing may be fixed in the short run, the authors expect that housing assistance, of all the government transfer programs discussed, will be the least responsive to changes in the unemployment rate.

Government Transfers and Material Hardship

The authors also posit that government transfers mitigate the experience of material hardship. But, as noted in many prior studies of government transfer programs and food insecurity, participants' self-selection into transfer programs is driven by need. If this is so, analyses of the relationship between program participation and hardship are potentially plagued not just by selection but more fundamentally by reverse causality; hardship leads to the use of government programs. Unfortunately, the literature devotes insufficient attention to the reverse causality problem.

The largest literature on government programs and hardship focuses on food insecurity and SNAP. Overall, this literature finds mixed evidence on the efficacy of the SNAP program. These mixed findings are in part due to the fact that households with higher levels of food insecurity are those that are more likely to use SNAP. That correlation can lead to

issues of both selection and reverse causality. A number of studies focus on the selection issue and use nonparametric estimators (Gibson-Davis and Foster 2006) or household fixed effects (Wilde and Nord 2005), but these studies continue to find that SNAP has perverse effects on food insecurity. Although these estimation techniques may help account for selection, they cannot deal with reverse causality. Instrumental variables can account for both issues. A number of studies use state participation rates as the instrument and generally find no association between SNAP and food insecurity. State participation rates deal with selection on the individual level but do not deal with reverse causality, in that states with high levels of need and hardship will have high levels of program participation (see, e.g., Gundersen and Oliveira 2001; Huffman and Jensen 2003). Although a number of studies use other instruments, most fail to satisfy the exclusion restriction (are not exogenous) necessary for a good instrument (e.g., Yen et al. 2008). The authors know of one study that uses good instruments (the percent of accidental overpayments and underpayments in SNAP). It finds that food stamp receipt is associated with a 22 percent reduction in food insecurity (Mykerezi and Mills 2010).

The authors find no studies of the association between UI and material hardship, but UI is found to help families escape poverty and likely helps them to avoid hardships (Gabe and Whittaker 2011). Jonathan Gruber (1997) finds that UI helps families smooth food consumption over time. The literature on TANF and material hardship is only slightly more extensive. Studies find that TANF sanctioning (reduction or termination of benefits) is associated with increased hardship, in particular utility hardship, but these studies do not account for selection into sanctioning and hardship (Kalil, Seefeldt, and Wang 2002; Reichman et al. 2005).

The literature on Medicaid's relationship with unmet medical needs is mixed, and these studies are also complicated by selection and reverse causality issues, as eligible individuals sign up for Medicaid when they have a medical need. Two studies find that Medicaid enrollment reduces unmet medical needs (Newacheck et al. 1998; Carlson, DeVoe, and Wright 2006), but they rely on cross-sectional data and cannot fully account for selection or reverse causality. One study uses instrumental variables to investigate this question and finds no association between Medicaid and unmet medical needs; however, this finding may stem from use of poor instruments (Long, Coughlin, and King 2005). Several studies report that expansions in Medicaid coverage of children are associated with improvements in utilization of well-child visits and with decreases in unnecessary hospitalizations (Currie and Gruber 1996; Dafny and Gruber 2005; Aizer 2007). Such findings suggest that Medicaid reduces unmet medical needs.

The literature is small on public housing, Section 8 housing, and housing insecurity. Experimental research on public housing vouchers finds that vouchers reduce housing insecurity by about 70 percent (Wood,

Turnham, and Mills 2008). The Moving to Opportunity (MTO) demonstration includes a comparison group that also followed rules of the Section 8 program, and no statistically significant association is found between housing insecurity and unmet medical need (De Souza Briggs, Popkin, and Goering 2010). However, the MTO participants were all public housing residents when they received the voucher. In contrast, most of the participants in the study by Michelle Wood and colleagues (2008) were not in public housing prior to participating in the experiment. Thus, the study by Wood and colleagues tests the effect of Section 8 vouchers, but the MTO demonstration tests the effect of moving from public housing to a Section 8 voucher. Janet Currie and Aaron Yelowitz (2000) use the gender composition of children in two-child families as an instrument for residence in public housing and find that residence in public housing projects is positively associated with housing conditions and schooling attainment for children, other things being equal.

In short, although many studies find positive associations between program participation and hardship, the findings likely stem from the failure to control for reverse causation. Among the few studies with sound methodological approaches that address or avoid reverse causation, program participation is found to reduce a variety of hardships.

Data and Methods

Data

Studies of changes in poverty and the income distribution during recessionary periods find that the bottom of the income distribution and low-educated workers are most affected by recessions (Blank and Blinder 1986; Blank and Shierholz 2006; Blank 2010). The current study uses data from the Fragile Families study because it follows an economically disadvantaged population that is likely to be hit hard by an economic crisis.

The Fragile Families study provides a sample that represents approximately 5,000 births in 20 large US cities (in 15 states). The study randomly sampled these children between 1998 and 2000; it oversampled nonmarital births (for more information, see Reichman et al. [2001]). The resulting sample is representative of births in large cities (populations over 200,000). The study interviewed mothers and fathers at the time of the focal child's birth. It conducted follow-up interviews when the child was 1 (1999–2000), 3 (2001–3), 5 (2003–6), and 9 years old (2007–10). Because the panel data and timing of the most recent survey provide a great deal of variation in the unemployment rate over time, they are ideal for the current study. Collected from May 2007 through February 2010, data for the year-9 follow-up survey (fifth wave) begin just before the large crash in December 2007 and extend beyond the official end of the Great Recession (June 2009; National Bureau of Economic Research 2010).

They also cover the point at which the unemployment rate peaked in October 2009.

The survey is designed to cover questions about parental relationships, economic well-being, parenting, and child well-being. Among the mothers who completed baseline interviews, 90 percent participated in the age-1 follow-up interview, 88 percent participated in the age-3 follow-up, 87 percent participated in the age-5 follow-up, and 76 percent participated in the age-9 follow-up.

Analyses of the respondents who attrite from the sample suggest that they are more disadvantaged than the rest of the sample. Compared with those who do not attrite, respondents who do are estimated to have lower income-to-needs ratios and to be more likely to have less than a high school degree. Attriters are also more likely to be Hispanic and to be immigrants. The discussion section considers the ways in which attrition affects this study's findings.

This study focuses on mothers' reports. They are more complete than those from fathers, and mothers are more likely to reside with children, as children may be both more vulnerable to the effects of hardship and more eligible for support from public programs than adults. Multiple imputation is used to impute values for missing data on the covariates (Rubin 1976; Allison 2002; analyses also are estimated on the nonimputed data, and the results are nearly identical). Specifically, five data sets are imputed, and the estimates are averaged over these data sets. All the survey waves are pooled, and the resulting sample represents 19,592 person-year observations; 3,466 person-year cases are missing because an individual was not interviewed in a particular wave. The final sample represents 16,146 person-year observations, and 4,357 respondents contribute to the estimates.

Material Hardship

Measures are created for five hardships. Additional detail on the survey questions is available in appendix A. For each of the five domains (food hardship, inability to pay bills, housing insecurity, medical hardship, and utilities cutoff), a dichotomous measure represents whether an individual reports experience of the hardship in the 12 months prior to the interview. In addition, a dichotomous summary (or index) measure is used to also assess the overall level of hardship experienced by a household (Beverly 2001*a*, 2001*b*). The summary hardship measure is constructed by assigning a value of 1 if a mother reports experiencing any of the 10 measured hardships (and a value of 0 otherwise). The authors also investigated the use of a count measure that adds the individual's hardships; the results from the count measure are substantively similar to those for the summary measure used here. The dichotomous measure is retained for consistency across models and ease of interpretation.

Unemployment

The authors construct a measure to capture the average unemployment rate over the 12 months prior to the mother's interview. The measure is constructed in this way to match the key dependent variable, which is a measure of hardship over the year prior to the interview.[2] Information about the monthly unemployment rate is appended to the data set using data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics' Local Area Unemployment Statistics (LAUS). Specifically, data for two different unemployment rates are appended. First, the authors identify the mothers' core based statistical area (CBSA, which is similar to a Metropolitan Statistical Area) at the time of each interview wave and attach to that wave's data the unemployment rate for the area in which the mother lives at the time of that interview. Second, the unemployment rate from the mother's original CBSA (regardless of whether the mother moved) is attached to the data for each interview wave. For example, if the study samples a mother in Boston and she moves to Indianapolis, the first version of the unemployment rate (current city) is the rate she faces in Boston until she moves to Indianapolis, and the Indianapolis unemployment rate is used as the current rate after she moves. The second version of the unemployment rate (that for the original, baseline city) is the Boston rate; she receives the unemployment rate in Boston at the time of her follow-up interview even if she has moved to another city. The reasons for both of these analyses are discussed in the Methods section.

This study focuses on the unemployment rate; however, as the latest recession illustrates, unemployment and employment do not always move together, since people can also drop out of the labor force (e.g., discouraged workers, for which this study has no data). Hence, the authors also looked at employment rates in data from two other sources: the LAUS (that uses data primarily from the Current Population Survey) and the Current Employment Statistics survey. For both data sets, rates are calculated using the number employed divided by the population of individuals aged 18–64 (from US Census Bureau data) and then averaged over the year before the interview. Using the employment rate (instead of the unemployment rate) does not substantively change the results. In addition, the results of the employment rate analyses with the LAUS data are very similar to those with the Current Employment Statistics data. Results from the employment analyses are not reported here but are available from the corresponding author, Natasha V. Pilkauskas, upon request.

2. The authors investigated relationships among the outcome variables and different lags in the unemployment rate, but estimates indicate that variation in the lags does not substantively change the study's results.

Government Transfer Variables

The analyses investigate the association between several government transfer programs and the unemployment rate. Respondents are asked whether they received SNAP, UI, or TANF in the year prior to the interview. The survey also asks whether respondents are currently covered by Medicaid and whether the focal child is covered by Medicaid. The year-9 survey does not distinguish Medicaid from other forms of health insurance for the mother. Therefore, the analyses assume that mothers receive Medicaid in year 9 if they report then that their child receives Medicaid. This measure may overestimate the use of Medicaid among mothers in that survey wave, so the estimates should be interpreted with caution. Results for Medicaid receipt by mothers are reported separately from those for receipt by the focal children. Finally, respondents are asked whether they currently live in a public housing project or receive government aid to pay for housing. These questions are all coded as yes or no responses.

Other Variables

The main focus of the analyses is on individual fixed-effects models. These models control for any constant characteristic of the mother across waves. However, pooled logistic models (without individual fixed effects) also are estimated for comparison. Those models include a number of basic demographic controls found to be important in other studies of material hardship. Previous research finds that marital status is statistically significantly related to the experience of material hardship (Lerman 2002). Other important predictors of hardship include race and ethnicity, education levels, and age (Mayer and Jencks 1989; Mirowksy and Ross 1999; Ouellette et al. 2004). A measure of mental health is also included. It assesses whether the respondent reports experience of a major depressive episode (dysphoric mood or anhedonia; hereafter, depression). This is assessed using the Composite International Diagnostic Interview-Short Form (Kessler et al. 1998), which is found to explain much variation in hardship (Sullivan et al. 2008; Heflin and Iceland 2009). Also included are controls for immigrant status (foreign-born), income-to-needs ratio (using the US Census Bureau's official poverty thresholds, which are adjusted by family composition and year), and city of residence, as well as an indicator for the year of interview. All control variables except depression are measured at the baseline survey. Data for depression are collected in the second wave survey (when the child was 1 year old), which asks about depression in the preceding year. Thus, the covariates predate the measures of the unemployment rate and material hardship (both of those measures vary over time).

Methods

Two logistic models examine the relationship between material hardship and the unemployment rate. In one logistic model, all of the waves of data are pooled. It includes a city fixed effect and extensive controls. The second logistic model includes person-specific fixed effects. The key independent and dependent variables are measured at the 1-, 3-, 5-, and 9-year follow-up interviews. As mentioned above, the covariates are all measured at the baseline (birth) interview and predate the variables of interest. The interview year is included as a time-varying covariate. Specifically, the pooled, city fixed-effects logistic model is estimated by the following equation:

$$\mathrm{MH}_{it} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 \mathrm{UR}_{it} + \beta_2 \mathbf{X}_{it-1} + \varepsilon_{it}, \quad (1)$$

where MH_{it} denotes the ith respondent's material hardship score in the survey waves 1, 3, 5, and 9; UR_{it} denotes the unemployment rate over the past year for survey waves 1, 3, 5, and 9; $\mathbf{X}_{it-1}$ is a vector of covariates that includes demographic characteristics of the individual measured at baseline; and ε_{it} is the disturbance term. The main parameter of interest is represented by β_1. In addition to the control variables discussed above, model (1) includes controls for each city.

The second logistic model includes person-specific fixed effects and is estimated using the following equation:

$$\mathrm{MH}_{it} = \beta_i + \beta_1 \mathrm{UR}_{it} + \beta_2 \mathbf{X}_{it} + \varepsilon_{it}. \quad (2)$$

Individual fixed-effects models can be used to exploit the longitudinal nature of the data and allow us to control for fixed personal characteristics that might be correlated both with residing in an area that has high unemployment rates and with suffering from material hardship. For example, if a person is constrained to stay in a high unemployment area (perhaps because he or she lacks the assets needed to move), then the lack of assets may also increase the probability that the individual will suffer from material hardship. In model (2), the only covariate included in **X** is interview year.

Each analysis is conducted using the original, baseline city unemployment rate as well as the current city unemployment rate. Results from preliminary analyses suggest (not surprisingly) that those who lived in a city with a higher baseline unemployment rate are more likely to report at follow-up interviews that they moved to a new city. Hence, the results also suggest that the unemployment rate experienced by an individual in the current city (at follow-up) is to some extent the result of an individual choice. Using the current unemployment rate for the baseline city partially solves the problem of endogeneity in the models that also control for individual fixed effects. The fixed-effect controls for the baseline city (which is a characteristic of the person and is fixed over the analysis).

Analyses using the original, baseline city unemployment rate allow an assessment of the association between the unemployment rate that individuals would have faced in the baseline city and material hardship. However, results from estimates that use the unemployment rate in the baseline city are very similar to those from models that use the rate in the current city and to those from additional analyses (not reported) that drop all respondents who moved.

Several functional forms are tested for both models (1) and (2), for example, entering unemployment as a set of dummies, logged, and quadratic. The substantive results are very similar across the different models. Models (1) and (2) are estimated for each of the material hardship domains, the summary (index) hardship measure, and the government assistance measures.

Results

Figure 1 shows the unemployment rate over the years of data collection in six of the 20 cities in this sample. These cities demonstrate the large fluctuations and the great variation in the unemployment rate across the sample cities. (Please see app. B, available in the online edition of the article, for a figure that illustrates the unemployment rate over the sampling period for all 20 cities.) The gaps in the graph represent the periods when no interview took place. The figure suggests a trend in the unemployment rate in all cities in the early 2000s. Unemployment appears to remain relatively flat through the mid-2000s and to decline in 2004–6. In the latest period of data collection (2007–10), there is a dramatic upward trend in the unemployment rate. This period corresponds to the Great Recession. The large variation in the unemployment rate suggests that these data are particularly suitable for investigating the effects of the unemployment rate on the well-being of families.

Table 1 provides descriptive information on material hardship, use of government safety net programs, and sample members' demographic characteristics, distinguishing members' characteristics by different rates of unemployment. The sample is weighted using the city sampling weights to account for the oversampling of nonmarital births in the Fragile Families data. About one-third of the sample identifies as black, one-third identifies as white, and one-quarter identifies as Hispanic. Thirty-two percent of sample members report having a high school degree (diploma or general equivalency diploma), and about 20 percent report having a college degree or education beyond college. A little over one-quarter indicate that they are immigrants, and about 50 percent report that they are married.

The estimates in table 1 suggest that the mean levels of material hardship are high and generally increase with the unemployment rate. Among mothers who live in areas that experience less than 4 percent unemploy-

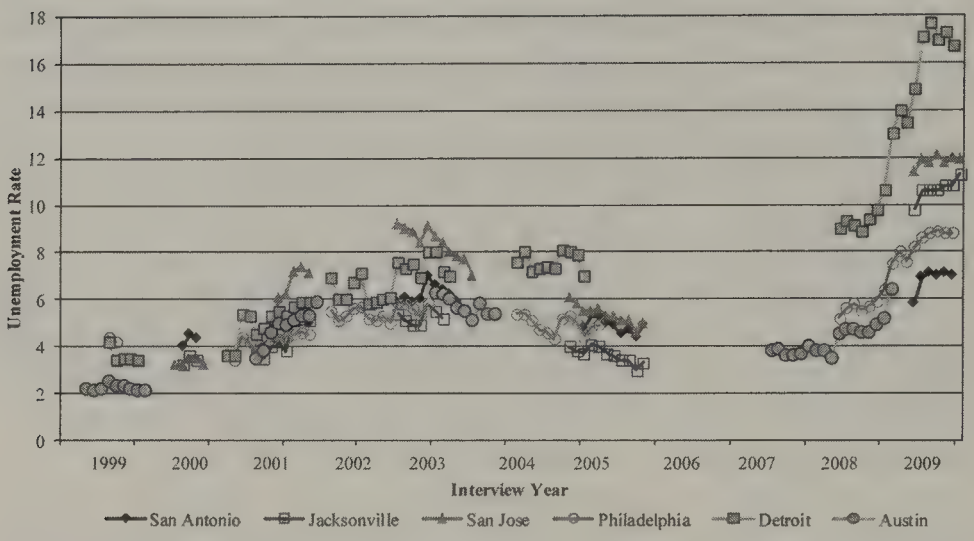


FIG. 1.—Unemployment rate during interviewing in six of the 20 cities in the sample

ment, about 41 percent report at least one of the 10 measured hardships (see results from summary hardship measure). In comparison, one or more material hardships are reported by about 51 percent of mothers living in cities where the unemployment rate is 9 percent or greater. The frequency of experiencing food hardship, bill hardship, and utility cutoff is generally estimated to increase with the unemployment rate (although the estimated increase is not entirely linear). The increase is most marked for those who report bill hardships and utility cutoffs. Where the unemployment rate is less than 4 percent, about 24 percent of the sample reportedly experience a bill hardship and 15 percent report a utility cutoff. In cities with unemployment rates of 9 percent or higher, 38 percent of the sample report bill hardships and 21 percent report utility cutoffs.

The authors expect that use of government assistance programs will increase with the unemployment rate; the results suggest that this is the case for SNAP, UI, and Medicaid. The exception is TANF; receipt appears to decrease as the unemployment rate increases. Respondents in areas with higher unemployment rates also report receiving less public housing.

Table 2 reports results from the pooled logistic model (1) and the individual fixed-effects model (2). The table estimates the effect of the current city unemployment rate and the original, baseline city unemployment rate on the summary material hardship index. Results from models that use the current city rate suggest that a 1-percentage-point increase in the unemployment rate is associated with a 10 percent increase in the likelihood of experiencing a material hardship in the pooled logistic model and with a 12 percent increase in the individual fixed-effects model. The results for the original, baseline models are similar. A 1-percentage-point increase in unemployment is associated with a 12 percent increase in like-

Table 1

SAMPLE DESCRIPTIVES (MEANS AND FREQUENCIES) BY THE UNEMPLOYMENT RATE (N = 16,146)

	UNEMPLOYMENT RATE					
	< 4% (n = 4,418)	4%–4.9% (n = 3,976)	5%–5.9% (n = 3,375)	6%–6.9% (n = 2,829)	7%–8.9% (n = 1,320)	≥ 9% (n = 208)
Material hardships:						
Summary hardship	40.67	41.23	40.30	40.18	44.10	50.80
Food hardship	8.18	9.26	9.43	10.78	11.78	10.33
Bill hardship	24.15	22.73	22.58	21.61	26.97	37.50
Housing insecurity	9.28	8.35	8.28	8.70	6.54	7.36
Medical problems	4.81	4.79	4.67	4.06	5.28	50.90
Utilities cutoff	14.52	17.25	14.32	14.92	20.36	21.45
Government safety nets:						
TANF	15.39	14.68	14.45	11.69	12.64	8.30
SNAP	27.32	30.09	30.49	31.67	37.07	33.16
UI	3.98	4.47	5.29	5.28	8.85	6.86
Housing	13.55	13.29	11.54	13.86	10.21	9.34
Medicaid mother	43.46	52.20	52.53	56.28	55.69	55.71
Medicaid child	42.58	50.85	51.49	55.86	55.27	55.74
Covariates:						
Age	26.60	27.04	27.24	27.05	26.81	27.23
SD	6.23	6.25	6.29	6.23	5.91	6.63
White	36.05	32.06	31.67	23.99	22.56	23.65
Black	37.42	38.84	28.72	33.75	41.87	35.93
Hispanic	20.32	23.69	32.90	34.86	27.46	26.39
Other	6.21	5.41	6.71	7.40	8.11	14.03
Less than high school	28.82	26.58	24.12	29.82	29.28	33.90
High school graduate or GED	30.51	33.45	35.14	31.57	28.97	26.39
Some college	19.16	18.88	21.12	18.69	23.08	18.19
College or more	21.51	21.09	19.62	19.92	18.67	21.52
Immigrant	17.52	21.97	24.39	31.01	25.59	32.78
Married	53.67	50.38	54.52	50.76	48.79	49.01
Cohabiting	21.82	23.65	23.29	22.78	23.62	24.88
Single	24.51	25.97	22.19	26.46	27.59	26.11
Poverty ratio (0–12)	3.15	3.22	3.08	3.11	3.15	2.54
SD	3.14	3.31	3.13	3.40	3.23	2.55
Depression	12.14	10.10	10.77	8.96	12.21	8.56

NOTE.—TANF = Temporary Assistance for Needy Families program; SNAP = Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, UI = unemployment insurance. Data are weighted and in person-years by city sampling weights; n's are unweighted. All covariates are measured at the baseline survey, with the exception of depression, which is measured at year 1.

lihood of experiencing a hardship in the pooled logistic model and with a 16 percent increase in the individual fixed-effects model. These estimates suggest that a 5–10 percent rise in unemployment during a time of economic crisis increases the likelihood of experiencing a material hardship by nearly 50 percent.

Some covariates are estimated to be statistically significantly associated with material hardship in the pooled logistic models. The results suggest that mothers with lower levels of education are more likely to experience

Table 2

SUMMARY HARDSHIP: UNEMPLOYMENT RATE IN CURRENT AND BASELINE CITY

	CURRENT CITY		BASELINE, ORIGINAL CITY	
	(1)	(2)	(1)	(2)
Unemployment rate	1.100**	1.121**	1.119**	1.155**
	(.022)	(.031)	(.035)	(.037)
Mom's age	1.000		1.000	
	(.004)		(.004)	
Black	1.171^{+}		1.161^{+}	
	(.099)		(.098)	
Hispanic	.875		.874	
	(.080)		(.079)	
Other	1.115		1.106	
	(.128)		(.126)	
Less than high school	1.143*		1.140*	
	(.067)		(.067)	
Some college	1.195**		1.193**	
	(.065)		(.065)	
College or more	.584**		.579**	
	(.086)		(.085)	
Immigrant	.705**		.705**	
	(.084)		(.084)	
Cohabiting	1.686**		1.683**	
	(.106)		(.107)	
Single	1.465**		1.464**	
	(.093)		(.093)	
Income-to-needs ratio	.867**		.867**	
	(.011)		(.011)	
Depression	2.470**		2.468**	
	(.195)		(.195)	
Constant	.438**		.426**	
	(.065)		(.069)	
Observations	16,126	8,558	16,126	8,558

NOTE.—Unless otherwise specified, results are presented as odds ratios and robust standard errors (in parentheses). Standard errors are clustered at the city level in model 1. Model 1 is a pooled logistic model, and model 2 is an individual fixed-effects logistic model. Logistic models also include city dummies, and all models include year dummies not shown here.

$^{+}p < .10$.

* $p < .05$.

** $p < .01$.

hardship; those with a college degree or more education are less likely than those with a high school degree. Being an immigrant is estimated to be negatively associated with the likelihood of experiencing hardship. Respondents who are single or cohabiting are estimated to be statistically significantly more likely to report experiencing material hardships than are their married counterparts. An increase in the income-to-needs ratio (measured at baseline) is estimated to be statistically significantly associated with a decrease in the summary hardship measure. Depression is also estimated to be statistically significantly associated with an increase in the level of hardship.

Table 3

HARDSHIP DOMAINS: UNEMPLOYMENT RATE IN BASELINE CITY, INDIVIDUAL FIXED EFFECTS

	HARDSHIP				
	Food	Bill	Housing	Medical	Utilities Cut Off
Unemployment rate (odds ratios)	1.052	1.128**	1.067	.989	1.161**
	(.046)	(.037)	(.045)	(.053)	(.042)
Observations	4,275	7,956	4,380	2,596	6,814

NOTE.—Standard errors are in parentheses. Models include year dummies not shown here.

** $p < .01$.

The individual fixed-effects model is the more conservative of the study's two tests of the association between the unemployment rate and hardship because it controls for all of the respondent's fixed characteristics, measured and unmeasured. In general, estimates suggest that the size of the coefficient on the unemployment rate is very similar between the pooled logistic and the individual fixed-effects models (depending on the model, likelihoods are estimated to differ between 1 and 3 percent). The following discussion focuses on the individual fixed-effects results. The remaining discussion also concentrates on the analyses that use the original, baseline city unemployment rate because that rate is better than the current city rate for testing the relationship between material hardship and an exogenous change in the unemployment rate experienced by the individual.

Table 3 reports the results of the individual fixed-effects regression of the unemployment rate in the original, baseline city on each of the five hardship domains. As the authors predicted, some hardship domains are estimated to be more strongly associated with the unemployment rate than others. Inability to pay bills (i.e., bill hardship) and having utilities cut off are the only two individual hardship domains estimated to be statistically significantly related to the unemployment rate in these models. The results suggest that a 1-percentage-point increase in the unemployment rate is associated with a 13 percent increase in the likelihood of experiencing a bill hardship and with a 16 percent increase in the probability of having one's utilities cut off. They suggest that food hardship, housing hardship, and medical hardships are not statistically significantly associated with the unemployment rate.

Table 4 shows the results of the individual fixed-effects regressions on the use of government transfer programs. The results suggest that use of each of the four programs, SNAP, UI, TANF, and Medicaid, is statistically significantly associated with the unemployment rate, and the results for the two entitlement programs (SNAP and UI) are consistent with our expectations. A 1-percentage-point increase in the unemployment rate is as-

Table 4

GOVERNMENT TRANSFERS: UNEMPLOYMENT RATE IN BASELINE CITY, INDIVIDUAL FIXED EFFECTS

	SNAP	UI	TANF	Medicaid (Mother)	Medicaid (Focal Child)	Public Housing
Unemployment rate (odds ratios)	1.187**	1.126*	1.164**	1.103**	1.098**	1.043
	(.044)	(.060)	(.051)	(.039)	(.038)	(.043)
Observations	6,651	3,035	5,435	6,717	6,940	5,484

NOTE.—SNAP = Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program; UI = unemployment insurance program; TANF = Temporary Assistance for Needy Families program. Standard errors are in parentheses. Models include year dummies not shown here.

* $p < .05$.

** $p < .01$.

sociated with a 19 percent increase in the likelihood of receiving SNAP and a 13 percent increase in the likelihood of receiving UI. Both TANF and Medicaid are estimated to be statistically significantly associated with the unemployment rate. The likelihood of receiving TANF is estimated to increase by 16 percent when the unemployment rate increases by 1 percentage point. Similarly, a 1-percentage-point increase in the unemployment rate is associated with an increase of roughly 10 percent in the likelihood of receiving Medicaid for mothers and for the focal child. The estimates suggest that receipt of public housing is not associated with the unemployment rate.

Unfortunately, the Fragile Families data are not well suited for directly estimating the mitigating effect of transfers on hardship. Survey questions on program participation and material hardship refer to the year prior to each interview, and time ordering within years is not possible. Still, the current estimates of the effects of unemployment on hardship and program participation, especially when they are used in conjunction with previous literature on the mitigating effects of transfer programs on hardship, can provide crude estimates of the hardship-mitigating effects of transfer programs during the Great Recession.

Counterfactual estimations are conducted to identify the mitigating effects of transfer programs during the Great Recession. The counterfactual model assumes that families that participate in safety net programs and do not experience hardship would experience hardship if they lacked access to these programs. For example, if an individual reports receiving SNAP but does not report experiencing a food hardship, she is assigned a food hardship in the simulation. The results from the counterfactual model can be seen as an upper bound estimate of the ability of government programs to aid families in avoiding hardship. Although we conducted multiple analyses, the discussion here is limited to results for SNAP and food hardship. Also, the definition of the Great Recession is

simplified to represent a change in the unemployment rate from 5 to 10 percent.

Analyses of the association between the unemployment rate and food hardship suggest that food hardship increased about 2.6 percentage points during the Great Recession, though the standard error associated with this estimate is large enough that the coefficient is not statistically significant at the 5 percent level. (Note that these calculations use the coefficients from the results of the linear probability models, which are substantively the same as the logistic models but simpler to use in these calculations.) The counterfactual estimate of the unemployment rate coefficient, however, is much larger than that from the earlier model and is statistically significant. The counterfactual analysis implies that, in the absence of SNAP, food hardship would have increased by about 8.4 percentage points during the Great Recession, or by about 3 times the estimated increase. Put another way, by subtracting the observed increase of 2.6 percentage points from the predicted increase of 8.4 in the absence of SNAP, SNAP is estimated to reduce food hardship by 5.8 percentage points.

The authors also estimate how SNAP mitigated the effects of the Great Recession on food hardship. To do so, this study's estimates of the effects of unemployment on SNAP participation are combined with another study's reliable estimates of the effects of SNAP participation on food hardship (Mykerezi and Mills 2010). The results suggest that a 1-percentage-point increase in the unemployment rate is associated with a 2-percentage-point increase in the use of SNAP. Thus, an increase in unemployment from 5 to 10 percent is estimated to increase SNAP use by 10.5 percentage points. Recall that Elton Mykerezi and Bradford Mills (2010) find that participation in SNAP reduces food insecurity by 22 percent. Together these findings, our best estimates, suggest that, in the absence of SNAP, food hardship would have been about 2.3 percentage points higher during the Great Recession. Note that this estimate is nearly as large as the estimated increase of 2.6 percentage points. That is, in the absence of SNAP, food hardship would have been nearly twice as high as the level observed here. Finally, it is interesting to note that adding the predicted 2.3-percentage-point increase to the observed 2.6-percentage-point increase yields an estimate that is nearly 40 percent of this study's upper bound estimate.

Summary and Conclusion

This article looks at the associations of the unemployment rate and material hardships and public transfers. Focusing on the unemployment rate allows the study to exploit an economic shock to families and neighborhoods. To the authors' knowledge, this is the first analysis to focus on the unemployment rate and multiple measures of material hardship.

Another important contribution of this study is that it examines the relationship in a panel data context, allowing the authors to control for many unobservable household characteristics that might be correlated with the propensity to experience hardship. Finally, the final survey wave collected data during the Great Recession and covers a period marked by substantial variation in the unemployment rate. These data also focus on mostly low-income families, and one might expect these families to be most likely to experience material hardship in a recession.

The results suggest that material hardship increases with the unemployment rate and that the likelihood of experiencing a hardship increases dramatically in recessionary periods. Moreover, the results of the pooled logistic models are generally very similar to those of the individual fixed-effects models and are robust to various ways of accounting for people who move. This robustness across models and specifications suggests that the results are not driven by unobserved characteristics of families or migration.

The authors find that the summary measure of hardship is related to the unemployment rate; among the individual hardships, only utility cutoffs and bill hardships are estimated to be associated with the unemployment rate, though safety net programs may buffer the effects of unemployment rate increases on other types of hardship. Food, housing, and medical hardships are not found to be statistically significantly associated with the unemployment rate. Far fewer individuals report experiencing these hardships than report bill and utility hardships; the statistically nonsignificant association may in part be due to the lack of sufficient statistical power needed to detect the association. Many studies of food insecurity use a more comprehensive scale (the US Department of Agriculture's 18-item food insecurity measure) that is not available in the current data. Although this study's measure is similar to those used in other studies of material hardship, the more comprehensive measure of food insecurity might yield different results.

Although this study does not directly test the extent to which government transfer programs alleviate the effect of the unemployment rate on material hardship, it investigates the association between the unemployment rate and public transfers. If public transfers are not responsive to changes in the unemployment rate, they cannot possibly mitigate the experience of hardship in times of economic crisis. As the authors expected, receipt of either entitlement program (SNAP or UI) is estimated to be positively associated with an increase in the unemployment rate. The estimates also indicate that receipt of either TANF or Medicaid is positively related to the unemployment rate, suggesting not only that entitlement programs are responsive to economic crisis but that other public transfer programs are also. The finding that TANF receipt is associated with the unemployment rate is contrary to the descriptive results. This suggests that the true relationship between changes in the economy and public as-

sistance may be missed if only descriptive or trend data are analyzed. The results further suggest that housing assistance is not related to the unemployment rate; this program may lack the ability to be as responsive as other government programs to sharp changes in the macroeconomy.

This study has some limitations. First, the sample is not generalizable to the US population, as the Fragile Families sample is representative of mothers who give birth in large cities in the United States. However, many of the mothers in the sample are low income and are likely to be particularly vulnerable in hard times. They are also a group for which policies and government assistance may be highly relevant. Second, although fixed-effects models control for time-invariant unobservable characteristics, they cannot account for unobserved time-varying individual characteristics that may be associated with both the unemployment rate and material hardship. However, the small differences between the pooled logistic and the individual fixed-effects estimates provide some reassurance that such unobservables are unlikely to drive the relationship between the unemployment rate and material hardship.

Third, this study uses the unemployment rate and cannot account for discouraged workers who have left the workforce as a result of sustained unemployment. Therefore, the results may underestimate the effect of the recession (as measured by unemployment) on material hardship; however, the estimates identify similar associations in supplemental analyses that analyze the employment rate (number of employed individuals divided by the population of individuals aged 18–64).

Finally, because of the panel structure of the data, some individuals attrite from the survey entirely or are missing at some survey waves. As mentioned above, individuals who attrite are estimated to be more economically disadvantaged than counterparts who remain in the sample. It is likely that the missing individuals are more vulnerable to hardship, and in particular to homelessness, than are individuals who stay in the survey. Thus, this study may underestimate the relationship between the unemployment rate and homelessness in particular but also unemployment's relationships with other hardships.

The findings are suggestive for public policy and future research. These models suggest that times of economic crisis generally increase families' likelihood of experiencing material hardships, particularly the likelihood that they will be unable to pay bills and will have utilities cut off. Although programs like SNAP, UI, TANF, and Medicaid likely provide a financial bridge for low-income families, these programs do not directly target the hardships families are most likely to experience. Few government programs directly provide assistance with utility payments (phone, gas, or electric) or general bill payments. Hence, in times of economic crisis families may be more likely to experience these hardships than other hardships. Programs currently available in some locations allow low-income families to lower their gas or electric rates and may help families to avoid having

their utilities disconnected. Future research should investigate whether these programs help families avoid utility hardships.

Research that further investigates the role of public safety net programs in avoiding material hardship would provide valuable information to policy makers. Programs like UI allow families to allocate resources as needed (to purchase food or pay rent), whereas programs like SNAP may alleviate food costs by allowing families to put money toward other costs and avoid hardship. As federal, state, and local governments face the need to make budget cuts, reducing funding to programs like SNAP, UI, and TANF could have real effects on the material hardships families face in a recession. The results of the counterfactual analyses and from prior literature suggest that SNAP helps to mitigate the association between the unemployment rate and food hardship. However, more research is needed. Future efforts should carefully account for both selection and reverse causality. They also should look at all types of government assistance and at different hardships.

Future research should also investigate hardship's effect on families and children. Some research suggests that material hardships have effects on children's aggressive behaviors (Zilanawala and Pilkauskas 2012). Material hardships may affect many aspects of the family or household unit. Given the growing literature that links childhood circumstances to adult outcomes, mitigating the effects of hardship on children should be a particular priority for public policy (compare Currie 2011).

Appendix A

Construction of Material Hardship Measures

The following describes the questions included in the construction of each of the of the material hardship domains.[3] The following prompt preceded the individual material hardship questions:

We are also interested in some of the problems that families face making ends meet. In the past 12 months, did you do any of the following because there wasn't enough money? [NOTE: REPEAT AS NEEDED—"*because there wasn't enough money*"]

Food Hardship

The food hardship measure includes two questions:[4]

In the past 12 months, did you receive free food or meals?

3. Questions are available at http://www.fragilefamilies.princeton.edu/documentation.asp.

4. In year 3, the food hardship variable is based on just one question: "Did you receive free food or meals?" The interview did not pose the second question.

In the past 12 months, were you ever hungry, but didn't eat because you couldn't afford enough food?

Bill Hardship

Inability to pay bills or bill hardship is measured using two questions:

In the past 12 months, did you not pay the full amount of rent or mortgage payments?

In the past 12 months, did you not pay the full amount of a gas, oil, or electricity bill?

Housing Insecurity

Housing insecurity is measured by three questions:

In the past 12 months, were you evicted from your home or apartment for not paying the rent or mortgage?

In the past 12 months, did you move in with other people even for a little while because of financial problems?

In the past 12 months, did you stay at a shelter, in an abandoned building, an automobile, or any other place not meant for regular housing, even for one night?

Utilities

The utilities cutoff variable includes two questions:

In the past 12 months, was your gas or electric service ever turned off, or the heating oil company did not deliver oil, because there wasn't enough money to pay the bills?

In the past 12 months, was your telephone service ever disconnected by the telephone company because there wasn't enough money to pay the bill?

Medical

The measure of medical hardship is based on one question:

In the past 12 months, was there anyone in your household who needed to see a doctor or go to the hospital but couldn't go because of the cost?

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Moving in Opposite Directions? Religious Involvement in Welfare Provision in Israel and the Low Countries

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How does religious change in society affect welfare organization practices and the religious aspects of the welfare state? Theories of historical institutionalism suggest that welfare organizations are highly stable, but this study finds that individual-level religious trends provoke corresponding welfare-organizational change. Three mechanisms link individual-level change to changes in organizational religiosity: workforce influence, welfare client demands, and political intervention. To demonstrate how these mechanisms connect social to organizational change, the study explores the effect of individual-level secularization in Belgium and the Netherlands on hospitals and welfare agencies. In contrast, a case from Israel evaluates the effect of individual-level sacralization on the same types of organizations. Organizational-level change takes the form of institutional conversion: religious providers discard most of their religious manifestations in a secularized environment but, conversely, public welfare providers adopt religion-conforming practices in an increasingly religious society.

The intersection between religion and the welfare state, once nearly an abandoned topic, is enjoying considerable traffic as of late (e.g., Cnaan, Sinha, and McGrew 2004; Van Kersbergen and Manow 2009; Bäckström and Davie 2010). One of the main questions this literature explores is how trends in individual-level religiosity affect the welfare state. Does individual-level secularization, for example, lead to a welfare state secularization represented in reduced reliance on religious organizations that provide social goods? The influence of individual-level religious trends

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on the religious character of welfare-producing institutions is at the center of this study.[1]

This study connects two distinct literatures and must contend with debates in both. First, the welfare state literature is tinged by a distinctly historical-institutionalist hue (see Esping-Andersen 1990; Pierson 2000; Thelen 2004). A central argument is that welfare state institutions are highly resilient to external pressures. Although welfare state restructuring does occur, the pace and reach of reform is limited by positive feedback mechanisms that underpin path dependency (Pierson 2000). Institutions structure incentives and preferences in ways that minimize actors' ability to effect institutional change. In the context of this study, it could be argued that path dependency limits the influence of aggregate individual-level religious changes, so that such changes are likely to have only a marginal effect on the religious orientation of welfare organizations. In fact, this is precisely what Anders Bäckström and Grace Davie (2010) suggest in their study of faith-based welfare organizations in several European countries. However, some who view these matters from a methodological perspective question whether the current emphasis on institutional effects unduly overshadows the influence that social forces exert in the public sphere (Van Kersbergen 2010). The work presented here offers an exploration of how social forces (in this case, religious social trends) affect welfare institutions.

Second, this work engages the secularization literature. Secularization theory posits that modernization reduces religious influence in society (Gorski and Altinordu 2008). Critics argue, however, that there is little support for the supposition that secularization is a worldwide trend and little evidence that secularization serves as a fair description of religious change in developed countries (Hadden 1987; Stark 1999). One response to these critiques is that secularization occurs on some dimensions but not necessarily on others (Casanova 1994). In order to make such distinctions, scholarship must develop definitions of the different dimensions of secularization (Dobbelaere 1981, 1999; Chaves 1994). The way forward involves an exploration of how religious trends on one dimension influence trends on other dimensions. This study links religious trends on the individual and organizational levels.

The empirical component of this study draws on a qualitative examination of how religious trends shape welfare institutions' religious nature in two different places. First, the work examines how individual-level secularization in the Low Countries (the Netherlands and Belgium) influences organizations dedicated to health care and welfare. A contrasting case study investigates individual-level sacralization (i.e., increasing religiosity) in Israel and its effect on public organizations in the two fields mentioned

1. The opposite causal direction, from organizations to individuals, is not studied here. The institutionalist literature discussed below offers valuable insights on how organizational traits shape individual behavior.

before. Studying the influence of both secularization and sacralization is novel: past studies concentrate exclusively on secularization despite growing acknowledgment that religiosity trends are not unidirectional.

The juxtaposition of secularization and sacralization provides a rich study of the effect of social-religious trends. Beyond this novel juxtaposition, the study makes three other contributions. First, the article seeks to demonstrate that individual-level religious trends exert influence over religiosity on the organizational-institutional dimension and, if taken in the aggregate, over the religious nature of the welfare state. Simply put, increase in individual-level secularization leads to increase in secularization of welfare organizations; individual-level sacralization brings about welfare organization sacralization. Second, this article proposes different mechanisms by which these processes occur. The mechanisms involve client, professional, and political pressure on organizations. All three pressure sources are related to individual-level religiosity. Third, the study argues that although organizational path dependency does not preclude change, it does impede institutional replacement (e.g., a public school replaces a denominational one). Change therefore is manifest in institutional conversion; the organization survives, but its nature is transformed in a direction that corresponds to the social-religious trend. Changes of this type often go unnoticed and, as a consequence, the importance of institutional resilience is overstated but that of social forces is understated.

Religious Trends and the Welfare State

A focus on whether and how individual-level religious trends affect welfare state institutions' religious character requires discussions of the literature on religious trends and the dynamics of welfare program change. Each is dealt with below.

The secularization debate focuses on two different dimensions, societal and individual (or macro and micro), and on the relationship between the two. The term "societal secularization" alludes to the declining influence of religion (or religious authority) in different spheres of public life, such as the state or the market (Dobbelaere 1981, 1999; Casanova 1994; Chaves 1994). Secularization at this level is linked to functional differentiation that sets apart secular and religious spheres.

The individual dimension focuses on religious trends in individual behavior (e.g., church attendance) and belief. In recent years, a lively debate has developed on the definition, scope, and even existence of secularization (e.g., Stark 1999). Influenced by this debate, proponents of neo-secularization, unlike their predecessors, acknowledge that secularization does not apply to all locales. In some places, there could be an opposite trend, and secularization does not necessarily apply to all dimensions (Norris and Inglehart 2004; Halman and Draulans 2006). The ob-

servation that secularization may occur in one dimension but not in another raises the possibility that societal- and individual-level religious trends might not parallel each other. To complicate matters even further, Karel Dobbelaere's (1981) influential classification of secularization adds a third dimension between the societal and individual: the organizational. The organizational dimension of secularization relates to the decline of religious control (or authority) over specific organizations (Chaves 1994; Dobbelaere 1999). How organizational-level religious trends relate to individual-level trends lies at the center of this study.

The organizational level is often missing from multilevel analyses of secularization, or it is merged into the societal dimension. However, this is not to say that the dimension receives no attention. Early analysis of the organizational dimension centered on how religious organizations, primarily churches, internally transformed so as to adapt to their secular environment. Thomas Luckmann (1967, 37) describes this transformation as "internal secularization." Secularization critics argue that proponents of internal secularization fail to adequately define and distinguish between religious and secular values (Chaves 1993, 1994). Later studies do a better job of pinning down certain organizational-level religious features that can be clearly defined as secularized. Examples of such features include growth in the share of nonclerical denominational leaders (Chaves 1993) and Catholic school curricula that are stripped of Catholic content (Dobbelaere 1979). Explanations of the process that led to such internal secularization, however, tend to rely on internal institutional features and pay little attention to the external pressure applied by changes in individual-level religious observance (Chaves 1993, 17). An important exception is Dobbelaere's (1979) work. He argues that internal secularization is primarily driven by the professionalization and secularization of the workforce in religious institutions.

The welfare state literature is strongly influenced by historical institutionalism. Although the concept of path dependency contributes to the understanding of welfare state continuity and resilience, it is considered to be less amenable to the theorization of change. In the early 2000s, different studies highlighted several institutional mechanisms of change. Among these were institutional layering and institutional conversion (Hacker 2004; Thelen 2004). The term "institutional layering" alludes to the practice of creating new organizations alongside existing ones. "Institutional conversion" occurs if an existing institution reorients itself after changing its mission and goals but does not change its nominal identity (Hacker 2004). Institutional lock-in effects created by positive feedback mechanisms make institutional replacement difficult and unlikely. Because institutional layering and conversion do not require major institutional restructuring, they provide a relatively easy path for change. Internal secularization should be understood as a subset of the more general institutional conversion category. Indeed, other relevant subsets are possible. The most important of

these is internal sacralization. Internal sacralization implies that the mode of operation and goals of extant organizations, possibly public, move in a distinctly religious direction. No known study discusses internal secularization or internal sacralization in the context of welfare state restructuring. Given the growing interest in the religion–welfare state nexus, such a discussion is timely.

How do individual-level religious trends influence welfare service delivery on the organizational dimension? The answer proposed here is that individual-level religiosity trends in a particular direction push welfare organizations in the same direction. This answer might appear trivial at first, but it is not. In a recent volume dedicated to the religion–welfare state nexus, Bäckström and Davie (2010, 193–97) conclude that individual secularization did not have the anticipated effect on the welfare regime in Europe. In fact, the role of churches is on the rise in many areas because of growing stress on the welfare state. Similarly, in an analysis of government involvement in religion, Jonathan Fox (2008) concludes that organizational secularization is marginal even in developed countries where individual secularization is prevalent. He identifies institutional inertia as one reason for this.

A different argument is advanced here. Precisely due to institutional rigidity, religious change on the institutional level will more often than not progress through the layering and conversion mechanisms. These changes, especially conversion, are often undetected by commentators who focus on the nominal classification of institutions as either religious or nonreligious and therefore overlook significant internal changes. Fox (2008), for example, surveys religious legislation on such topics as government funding of religious schools and of religious charitable organizations. What the survey fails to indicate, however, is how religious these organizations truly are. In the absence of such an indication, the survey results might lead to an overstatement of state involvement with religious organizations. Conversely, Fox's (2008) survey does not take into account the possibility that nominally nonreligious organizations adopt a religious mode of operation and pursue religious goals. Such an oversight could lead to an underestimation of organizational religiosity. An emphasis on internal secularization or sacralization could contribute to a more accurate measure of organizational religiosity.

The case studies are intended to illustrate that individual-level religiosity affects the organizational level and also to show how this occurs. Although much of past secularization research ignores the causal link between the individual and organizational (or societal) levels, the work of Dobbelaere constitutes a significant exception. Dobbelaere (1979) argues with reference to the Belgian case that the rise of professionalization increased the sway of professionals within religious organizations but that this increase in power comes at the expense of religious authorities. Professionalization and secularization are related, as professionali-

zation involves practitioners' adoption of perspectives and norms that are said to reflect a scientific outlook, which could at times be at odds with the religious perspective.

Dobbelaere's insight that professionalization paved the way for internal secularization is an important one, and the workforce influence he identifies is one of the three mechanisms by which changes in individual-level religiosity exert an effect over the organizational level. To a great extent, professionalization within religious welfare organizations became possible, and even necessary, because of the decline in the number of religious-order members who could serve in the workforce of religious welfare organizations, be they hospitals or charities (Dobbelaere 1979). Although professionalization and secularization tend to go together, it should be stressed that workforce secularization could exert an effect independent of professionalization. Moreover, under circumstances of social sacralization, the share of professionals who are religious is likely to increase. In such a case, the organizational-secularizing effect of professionalization could very well be more than offset by a growing share of professionals who are religious. Hence, the author expects that workforce professionalization and secularization will jointly drive organizational secularization in places where society is undergoing secularization. However, where society undergoes sacralization, increasing workforce religiosity, on the one hand, and professionalization, on the other, are expected to exert opposite effects.

Organizational change could be brought about in at least two other ways. First, trends in individual-level religiosity are likely to influence the religious character of a welfare organization's client base as well as the clients' service demands and needs. Although religious individuals may be more likely than nonreligious clients to ask for services that are compatible with their beliefs, nonreligious clients may prefer services that are less restricted by religious dictums and less enthused by religious themes than are those preferred by their religious counterparts. A change in clientele preferences could result in institutional conversion. Client demands may push organizations to embrace practices that are consistent with the wishes of the clientele. In some cases, organizations would adapt to client demands at the individual level: each client would choose a form of service compatible with his or her inclinations (whether religious or nonreligious). If institutions offered such a choice, religious trends would be subtle. They might come in the form of growth in the share of clients choosing a specific service form. In these instances, the effect of religious change would overlap with that of the new management-inspired service ethos of cultural sensitivity, and it would be difficult to distinguish between the two.[2]

2. The adoption of a culturally sensitive service ethos is likely to strengthen religiously oriented services even without individual-level sacralization. If individual-level sacralization occurs, a culturally sensitive service orientation can be expected to magnify its effect.

Indeed, culturally sensitive measures are likely to emerge if religious change causes a growing popular demand for them. For example, the combined effect of increased cultural sensitivity and individual-level sacralization could lead to a growth in the aggregate share of religion-sensitive social services. In some cases, however, individual clients would not be afforded choice, and client pressure would result in a service change for all clients.[3] Of course, client preferences do not necessarily affect a change in institutional character. Clients could move to other organizations if they exist or could be established (a phenomenon that would result in institutional layering).

Another alternative to workforce and clientele pressure for change is political influence. In democracies, the vox populi often translates into political power and subsequently to political pressure, which could exert an important influence on welfare organizations. For example, a growing religious population could elect local or national representatives who voice demands for religious curricula in schools.[4]

These three causal mechanisms apply to both secularization and sacralization. They can function on national and local levels. Past studies focus on trends in developed countries and thus examine secularization, not sacralization. Although individual-level changes in religiosity may move in one direction within a country as a whole, the situation could be quite the opposite in certain areas of the country. For example, large immigrant enclaves in West European nations often show evidence of a movement toward increased religious adherence, but this trend contrasts sharply with a national trend toward secularization. Conversely, immigration to Israel by secular Russian Jews could create specific local trends that differ from the national trend toward sacralization. From welfare organizations' perspective, local trends in religiosity might be no less important than national trends, because welfare organizations are local: clients and workers belong to local communities, and local trends affect local politics. Clearly, such complexity requires researchers to be cognizant of possible differences between national religious trends and local ones.

An exploration of influence by individual-level trends on welfare organizations cannot be complete without consideration of an important managerial trend that affects developed welfare states: new public management (NPM) reforms. The NPM trend was originally inspired by neoliberal thinking, and its guiding principle is to employ the market as a model for public sector reform (Hood 1991). Important ingredients of NPM are an increase in reliance on nongovernmental activities to deliver

3. For example, an Israeli hospital might offer kosher meals only to those who request them. It also might determine that all clients, whether they want it or not, must eat kosher on hospital premises. The latter practice, which is not culturally sensitive, is, in fact, the rule in Israeli hospitals.

4. This is not to say that changes in political influence cannot be affected by other factors, such as critical shifts in political organization.

services as well as the introduction of competition among public service providers to improve quality, reduce costs, and increase consumer choice. One possible effect of growing competition is growth in organizational efforts to attract clients and, consequently, growth in responsiveness to client demands (Le Grand 2007), including religious demands. The current work suggests that the pace of organizational conversion in response to individual-level trends is inversely associated with the extent to which the organization is insulated from political and client pressures.

Study Design

The main focus of this study falls on religious change in welfare organizations. Religious change on this level is represented in one of two ways: (*a*) a change over time in the share of clients served by religious organizations, new as well as established, or (*b*) dilution or strengthening of the religious nature of welfare organizations (public or private). Clearly, what constitutes secularization or sacralization in the second sense is debatable. What one commentator might regard as secularization could be regarded by another as religious change. Consider, for example, the decision to allow the celebration of the Catholic mass in vernacular languages. At least in the secularization case study, this problem is addressed through the choice of Catholic welfare organizations (see below). Nevertheless, the author acknowledges that subjective interpretation of what constitutes relevant change cannot be fully avoided.

The cases chosen for this study include instances in which individual-level secularization is dominant and others in which individual-level sacralization is present. The Low Countries are the site of cases chosen to explore secularization, and Israel is the site of the case chosen to examine sacralization. Clearly, Israel is a unique country in many ways, and this uniqueness complicates cross-country comparisons. For example, religious change in Israel is driven primarily by a relatively high natural growth rate among the religious population, while immigration and ideational change are more dominant determinants of change in most other countries. Nevertheless, in terms of the main focus of this study—how religious change affects welfare organizations—Israel appears to be less idiosyncratic. This implies that international comparisons are plausible. The organizational focus of this study falls primarily on religious trends within Catholic welfare organizations in the Low Countries and within publicly operated welfare organizations in Israel.

Religious development in the Low Countries is moving in the opposite direction from that in Israel. Longitudinal surveys of Belgium and the Netherlands suggest that church attendance and membership, the primary measures of individual-level religiosity, have declined precipitously and consistently since the 1950s (Norris and Inglehart 2004, 85–91). Apart from this straightforward trend toward secularization, two other

features make Belgium and the Netherlands excellent sites for case studies. First, religion in both countries, as also in Israel, has been linked in the past to the political-institutional framework. The Christian Democratic parties in Belgium and the Netherlands are confessional parties with long-standing religion-affirming positions on a variety of issues. The political sphere is therefore responsive to religious sentiments, so citizens could work in this sphere to affect the religious behavior of organizations. Second, Catholicism is a central religion in both countries and the dominant religion in Belgium. From a methodological perspective, investigating internal secularization is easier in Catholic welfare organizations than in most others, because determining an organization's religious perspective is a relatively straightforward affair. The Catholic magisterium spells out the church's formal position on a range of issues. Catholic welfare-organization behavior that strays significantly from the directives of the magisterium is not a matter of religious change but an example of internal secularization.

Israel provides an example of a trend in the opposite direction. A survey of the Israeli Jewish population finds that 16 percent described themselves as religious in 1999, and this figure increased to 20 percent in 2008. Yet, the share of Israeli Jews who define themselves as secular has not declined in recent years and has even increased since the early 1990s because of massive immigration from the former Soviet Union (Ventura and Philippov 2008).[5] Fertility rates tend to be very high among religious Jews, especially among the Ultraorthodox, and among Israeli Arabs, who tend to be religious. Thus, the demographic trends clearly favor the religious population (Bystrov and Sofer 2010). There is considerable geographical variation, however, in religiosity figures. In Tel Aviv, Israel's second-largest city, only 2 percent of the population above age 20 identified themselves as Ultraorthodox in 2006–8, but 29 percent indicated this in Jerusalem, Israel's largest city (Choshen and Korach 2010). The author expects that these geographically uneven trends in individual-level religiosity will create corresponding variation in the trend toward sacralization at the level of welfare institutions.

This work explores welfare organizations in two core policy domains of the welfare state: health care and social work. The primary service organizations in these domains, hospitals and welfare agencies, have histories of management by both religious and state entities. This mixed history suggests that both religious and nonreligious service options are viable. Therefore, there is potential for organizational-level religious change in either direction.

Finally, this study utilizes qualitative methods, which are well suited for tracing the causal mechanisms that connect individual-level trends to the

5. Traditionalists constitute a third category situated in between the religious and the secular.

organizational level (George and Bennett 2005). Personal and phone interviews (over 20) with organization and government officials constitute a primary source of information.[6] Most interviewees were contacted because the position they held, or other information sources, suggested that they possessed extensive knowledge of the topic. Some interviewees recommended others. Interviewee diversity, in terms of organizational (i.e., political, bureaucratic, or nongovernmental) and religious background, was a major criterion in interviewee selection. Interviews were semistructured and based on a list of questions that stayed relatively constant for interviewees with similar occupational positions (e.g., hospital managers) but varied considerably across positions. For example, questions in an interview with the minister of welfare focused mainly on policy formulation and politics, while those for the head of the budget and economy unit in the Welfare Ministry asked about budgetary trends. Interviewees were asked about religious trends in organization and their determinants. Interview analysis took the form of narrative structuring, and informant triangulation is employed to corroborate information derived from interviews and other sources (Kvale 1996). In addition, the work relies extensively on previous studies of welfare organizations in Belgium and the Netherlands. These data are complemented by relevant information drawn from governmental and nongovernmental reports as well as from newspaper coverage. The study focuses on time periods in which clear individual-level religious trends can be observed in each country. The case studies of the Low Countries run from the late 1950s to the present; that for Israel runs from the late 1980s to the present.

Belgium and the Netherlands: Organizational Secularization

In the Low Countries, and mainly in the Netherlands, individual-level secularization has paralleled a societal-level depillarization in which the separate institutions that catered to insular religious and ideological groups (i.e., the pillars) gradually disintegrated and merged.[7] In both countries, confessional political parties lost dominance (Dekker and Ester 1996). How did these individual-level changes affect religious welfare organizations, and, specifically, how did they affect Catholic ones?

Hospitals

Depillarization in the Netherlands brought about mergers between Catholic and non-Catholic hospitals. As a result, the number of Catholic

6. The study does not identify some interviewees per their explicit request.

7. Pillarization (*Verzuiling* in Dutch) is an arrangement by which almost all social and political organizations (e.g., newspapers, schools, parties) are affiliated with mutually exclusive blocs whose membership is defined primarily by religion or ideology.

hospitals dropped (Dekker 2004), but many continue to operate as Catholic institutions, and the majority of Belgian hospitals are Catholic. The Catholic magisterium and papal encyclicals condemn numerous medical procedures; abortion and euthanasia are condemned, above all, but also in vitro fertilization, sterilization, and the administration of contraceptives (Iltis 2006; Engelhardt 2009). By choosing to begin performing such procedures, hospitals clearly signal a shift toward internal secularization. Is this the case for Catholic hospitals?

The answer is an unequivocal yes. Dobbelaere (1979) reports that, in the 1970s, Belgian Catholic hospitals performed abortions and other practices prohibited by official Catholic doctrine. Because of new enabling legislation, abortions have become more common since then, and euthanasia has been added to the list of grave sins practiced in Catholic hospitals. It is impossible to determine the frequency with which these different procedures are practiced in Catholic facilities. In part, this is because hospital administrations and religious authorities have little interest in drawing attention to an awkward state of affairs in which hospitals (or at least physicians) ignore doctrine. For instance, Catholic hospital officials in both of the Low Countries admit that their hospitals perform in vitro fertilizations despite the Vatican's clear prohibition. Nevertheless, hospital officials refrain from challenging the ruling publicly (Lewis 1987).

Not all procedures are met with the same level of opposition. In vitro fertilization, sterilization, and prescriptions for contraceptives are problematic, but euthanasia and abortion pose a greater challenge to Catholic hospitals. Although they allow euthanasia, the conditions under which it is administered are more restrictive than in public hospitals (Lemiengre et al. 2007). Abortions are performed by several (although not all) Catholic hospitals in the Low Countries but often under relatively restrictive conditions that do not apply in non-Catholic hospitals (e.g., abortions are performed only for health reasons, not for social ones; Martien Pijnenburg, former director, Dutch Catholic Association of Care Institutions, phone interview with author, January 18, 2011; Chris Gastmans, ethical advisor to Caritas Catholica Belgium, phone interview with author, January 31, 2011). Although certain restrictions distinguish many Catholic hospitals from nonreligious hospitals, there is little doubt that Catholic hospitals' practices diverge very significantly from official Catholic doctrine. What mechanisms explain this result?

The first possibility is identified by Dobbelaere (1979). He argues that the processes of workforce professionalization and secularization are the main reason for internal secularization in Belgian hospitals: "It seems to me that lay professionals, developing the professional rationale, are the carriers of secular tendencies, for it is they who determine the organizational structure of hospital and school and who marginalize religion even within the Catholic pillar" (1979, 58).

In the professionalization of medicine, Dobbelaere notes, professional principles crowded out religious ones, and the new professionals were unlikely to be members of a religious order. By the early 1970s, only one in eight nurses was a member of such an order (Dobbelaere 1979). In the Netherlands, decline in the number of church order members led to the gradual disappearance of religious medical personnel. A Dutch interviewee explained that Catholic hospitals found it increasingly difficult to remain substantially Catholic as the professional personnel became predominantly nonreligious, because these professional personnel do not necessarily accept Catholic Church teachings (Pijnenburg, interview). In fact, the distance between church doctrines and the staff's personal beliefs creates an implementation gap: Rome and even the local Catholic leadership may dictate certain policies, but physicians and nurses act according to their own lights.

Of course, hospital leadership is closer to the ground than is the leadership of the church or the national Caritas organization (the umbrella organization for Catholic welfare activities). Hospital leaders are therefore better able to monitor professional behavior, but members of hospital administrations and boards also are influenced by the individual-level trend toward secularization. In the Netherlands, only a few remaining members of Catholic hospital boards are also members of the religious orders, and these are elderly people (Pijnenburg, interview). The church does not require that the chairs of Catholic hospitals' boards be Catholic. Under these circumstances, hospital leadership and medical personnel are not necessarily guardians of Catholic doctrine.

A second possible explanation for the divergence between Catholic hospital practice and Catholic doctrine is associated with the way that individual-level secularization might lead to changes in the demands and needs of hospital clientele. Hospitals serve a mixed religious clientele. To the extent that Catholic hospitals are unique, their distinctive practices could either attract or repel patients. Individual-level secularization is likely to increase the share of patients who find Catholic restrictions unnecessarily onerous. In Belgium, for example, patients complain about certain Catholic restrictions on abortions and euthanasia (Gastmans, interview). Because non-Catholic medical alternatives are scarce, Catholic hospitals face political pressure to accommodate client demands. In the Netherlands, unsatisfied customers can usually choose an alternative facility, Catholic or not, that offers the controversial service (Pijnenburg, interview). Although the availability of such choice probably reduces political pressure, it is likely to increase market pressure on Catholic hospitals to adopt problematic practices so that they do not lose business. In 2006, the Dutch government adopted a reform that introduced competition among hospitals and physicians. The competition for patients has significant financial implications. Although intended to improve medical quality, the reform also increases the pressure on hos-

pitals to conform to client preferences. Such pressure could ultimately push Catholic hospitals further toward organizational secularization (Dwarswaard, Hilhorst, and Trappenburg 2011).

A final explanation for the divergence between Catholic hospital practice and church doctrine is the possibility that individual-level secularization creates the conditions under which political pressure for secularization increases. Political pressure is not intended to close religious welfare institutions but to make them comply with generally accepted and authorized practices. Euthanasia policy in Belgium appears to be the best example of this. The weakening of the traditionally dominant Christian Democratic Party enabled the establishment of a coalition government without the Christian Democrats in 1999. In 2002, this government passed the Euthanasia Act, which made euthanasia permissible under a relatively broad range of conditions (Gastmans, Van Neste, and Schotsmans 2006).[8] Public opinion polls conducted at the time indicate that three-quarters of the Belgian public supported such a law (Cohen-Almagor 2009). The Belgian archbishop rejected euthanasia outright, and Catholic hospitals initially opposed it. The government viewed this reticence by Catholic hospitals as a violation of patient rights (Delkeskamp-Hayes 2006) and as a challenge to the rule of law (Gastmans, interview). The Liberal Party proposed eliminating public funding for hospitals that prohibit euthanasia and revoking the license of any hospital that denies euthanasia to a patient (Delkeskamp-Hayes 2006). Capitulating in the face of such bleak choices, the Catholic hospitals allowed euthanasia.

Caritas assigned its ethics committee the task of formulating new guidelines that would provide a middle way between public political pressure in favor of euthanasia and the Catholic doctrine's prohibition of it. The guidelines advised health-care facilities to emphasize palliative care over euthanasia, to practice euthanasia only if it is requested by adults who are terminally ill and mentally stable, and to offer it only after the patient rejects other options (Gastmans et al. 2006). Yet, even this compromise is unsatisfactory in the eyes of secular critics. Patients who do not meet the restrictive criteria posed by the Catholic facilities, and therefore are denied euthanasia, have repeatedly appealed to the media and politicians. Hence, there is constant pressure on Catholic hospitals to fully comply with Belgian law. The ethical advisor of Caritas claimed that, apart from the Christian Democrats, the other major parties support this stance of full Catholic compliance (Gastmans, interview). The public, albeit indirectly, is supportive of practices that conflict with Catholic doctrine. It is thus unsurprising that political action forced organizational secularization.

8. In the Netherlands, the weakening of the once-dominant Christian Democratic Party enabled a liberal-labor government to pass a similar 2000 act enabling euthanasia (Weber 2000).

As Catholic hospitals gradually become Catholic in name only, why does the Catholic hierarchy not sanction hospitals that allow the prohibited measures? In an interview, the former director of the Dutch Catholic Association replied that religious authorities have no direct control over hospitals and would rather overlook several problematic practices than lose a hospital entirely (Pijnenburg, interview). A Belgian interviewee stressed that the Catholic archbishop recognizes the political and other public pressures to which the hospitals are subject; he chooses to engage in dialogue instead of threats (Gastmans, interview).

Social Work

Caring for the needy and promoting social justice are hallmarks of the Catholic faith, especially since the Second Vatican Council. In both of the Low Countries, the Catholic pillar included social welfare organizations dedicated to the care of the poor, troubled youth, immigrants, and other groups. How has individual secularization affected this field?

A recent cross-country survey on efforts by faith-based organizations (FBOs) to combat social exclusion assumes "that the role of FBOs is increasing because they are filling the gap that was left after the supposed withdrawal of the welfare state, particularly in social welfare and social protection" (Dierckx, Vranken, and Kerstens 2009, 11). Alleged welfare state retrenchment is cited elsewhere as a reason for FBO expansion (Bäckström and Davie 2010). Nevertheless, these claims are not backed by any longitudinal figures. Although the cross-national surveys emphasize the contemporary scope and significance of FBO operations, they do not study religious welfare activity over time.

In fact, surveying the development of the nonprofit sector in the Netherlands, Paul Dekker (2004) finds that religious cleavages have largely lost their significance, and the old world of pillarized social services has given way to new hybrid organizations that cross not only confessional lines but also sectoral ones (i.e., business, nonprofit, and public). Stephen Monsma and J. Christopher Soper (1997, 79) observe that Dutch governments have economically rationalized the social service area since the 1980s by pushing for mergers of small agencies, and they argue that this policy exerts strong influence on the autonomy of religious agencies.

Some information on changes in the welfare activity of FBOs can be found in a testimonial by a Dutch social worker employed in several "confessional" projects from 1956 to 1982. He relates a story of internal secularization within religious (albeit Protestant) social work organizations. In 1949, the government began to fund religious agencies that work with youth and other troubled groups. From early on, social workers followed a theology distinct from that of the sponsoring church and ignored the sponsor's requests to infuse their work with explicitly religious messages. In later years, new secular social workers entered the

agency, and whatever religious character the service possessed was lost (Glenn 2000, 140–43). In this case, workforce professionalization and secularization combined to produce internal secularization. Robert Cox (1992) also writes of how the professionalization of social workers led to a rapid dilution of the agencies' religious character. Maria Brenton (1982) argues that organizational secularization, especially pronounced among Catholic social service agencies since the 1960s, is intricately linked to individual-level secularization. Not only did lay professionals distance themselves from religious messages but service recipients became considerably less religious. Moreover, religious social assistance agencies became increasingly dependent on state funds, and the state conditioned funding on the requirement that services by confessional agencies must be available to members of all religious creeds (Brenton 1982).

In Belgium, professionalization undermined the Catholic character of the social services (Dobbelaere 1979). Social workers are trained to accept the client's worldview, which could diverge considerably from the church's official position (e.g., single motherhood). One survey of Catholic social workers found that a third of the respondents expressed uncertainty as to whether, given the tensions between professionalism and Catholicism, Christianity should play a role in their work (Dobbelaere 1979).

Although social work is an area of special interest for the church, this did not prevent organizational secularization. That secularization has been driven by the professionalization and secularization of the workforce, the secularization of the clientele, and the influence of the state.

Israel

Israel's population is gradually becoming more religious, although this process is far from linear. The Ultraorthodox Jewish and Muslim populations (members of which are considerably more likely to identify as religious than are Jews in general) demonstrate especially impressive growth due to high fertility rates (Bystrov and Sofer 2010). On the societal level, religion and state in Israel are not separated, and several religious parties have been elected to the Israeli parliament (Knesset) since the establishment of the state. Between 1981 and 2009, Jewish religious parties almost doubled the number of seats held in the Knesset, from 10 to 19, and the majority of religious Knesset members now identify themselves as Ultraorthodox. Israel's governments are often dependent on the support of the two Ultraorthodox parties: Shas and Yahadut Hatorah. The increasing strength of the Ultraorthodox political bloc could be attributed to both the demographic change mentioned before and to organizational changes, particularly the establishment of Shas. Both parties are politically powerful.

Hospitals

In Israel, the majority of hospitals are publicly funded and owned by government, the General Sick Fund, or public nonprofits. The majority of the Ultraorthodox public is served by general hospitals, although there are two Ultraorthodox hospitals. How does individual-level sacralization affect general hospitals, which are nominally nonreligious organizations?

Ultraorthodox Jews seek treatment in modest settings that minimize interactions between the sexes and sometimes also minimize contact with patients from other groups. None of the hospitals formally separates wards along sex lines, but some hospitals, especially those in areas with a relatively large Ultraorthodox population, try to allocate separate rooms for Ultraorthodox patients. In particular, such allocations are made for Ultraorthodox women in maternity wards. The separation insulates Ultraorthodox women from nonreligious counterparts who might behave in ways that are at odds with religious law (e.g., watching television on the Sabbath). Ultraorthodox leaders have tried to segregate psychiatric institutions and general hospital psychiatric wards along sex lines, arguing that such separation would prevent indecent acts (Even 2009).

Hospitals also accommodate religious requirements that demand physical restructuring. Two interviewed hospital managers mentioned that they made changes to hospital walkways so that Jewish Kohens (i.e., Jews who are descended from the ancient priestly sect) can use them. More importantly, hospitals allocate space and resources for synagogues and even a Muslim prayer room.

A series of interviews indicates that Israeli hospitals are very active in adapting their services to the needs of the religious public. This is manifested in the nature of ancillary services. Hospitals have always served kosher food but also began serving *glatt* kosher food in recent years, because it meets a stricter standard. This practice could be explained as an indication of growing cultural sensitivity. However, sensitivity does not extend to those who prefer nonkosher food. To maintain their kosher status, hospitals prohibit people from bringing leavened bread into the facility during Passover. Security guards at hospital entrances often double as enforcers of the hospital's kosher-related rules during this period.

Not only ancillary services are affected by religious requirements. Physicians in some hospitals use specialized equipment that helps them to avoid the prohibition on writing during the Sabbath. In one Jerusalem hospital, blood pressure is measured on the Sabbath with a hand-activated monitor and not by use of the digital monitor. In fact, a couple of research centers are dedicated to medical equipment innovation that helps meet the requirements of Jewish law. Thus, there is constant investment in new medical technologies that accommodate religious beliefs.

Two things became clear in interviews with hospital managers and politicians. First, hospitals' religious adaptations vary. Hospitals located

in religious areas do more than those in more secular areas, though all hospitals are attuned to some extent to the needs of the religious public (e.g., all hospitals serve kosher food, but special Sabbath writing equipment is used only in some). Second, most interviewees, especially those who worked for hospitals located in relatively religious areas, note that hospitals are more accommodating to religious sensitivities today than they were a few decades ago, though changes are slow and gradual. For instance, a Jerusalem general hospital manager stated in an interview: "It is both the public that has changed and the hospital's willingness to cater to the public's [religious] preferences" (hospital manager, interview with author, November 8, 2010, Jerusalem). Why is this so?

First, there was a consensus among interviewees that the medical staff's religious identity has little to do with organizational sacralization and that the medical staff is not significantly more religious than in the past. This is undoubtedly related to the fact that pursuit of a medical career is still uncommon among the Ultraorthodox. A Jerusalem hospital manager said that he doubts whether there is a single Ultraorthodox physician among the hospital's staff of hundreds, yet his personal estimate is that 30 percent of the public served by his hospital is Ultraorthodox.

Second, individual-level sacralization among patients drives internal sacralization on the organization level. Religious patients have certain treatment preferences that could require hospitals to choose a stricter standard of kosher food or adopt procedures and devices that minimize violations of the Sabbath. Hospital staff is approached by religious clients with requests, and all managers stated that their hospital is open to such requests; however, not all patient demands are granted. Some cases, for instance, might involve a conflict between Ultraorthodox demands and the behavior of nonreligious patients (e.g., watching television on the Sabbath). Several hospital managers claimed that the Ultraorthodox public is generally pleased with religious arrangements at the hospitals they manage and that patients are far more concerned with the quality of medical treatment. Nevertheless, interviewees stated that hospitals make a conscious effort to attract as many clients as possible; in relatively religious areas, attracting clients entails accommodating their religious needs. Hospital managers stressed that this is especially true of maternity wards. Competition between hospitals is fierce, and public reimbursement is generous. In these wards, it is therefore quite common to find Ultraorthodox- or Arab-only rooms, although hospitals are careful not to guarantee the availability of these arrangements. Ultraorthodox politicians also stressed that interhospital competition for patients is a factor in hospitals' responsiveness to Ultraorthodox client demands. A former Ultraorthodox health minister said, "The market did a very good job" because hospitals became more responsive for fear of losing Ultraorthodox clients. Competition-enhancing reforms in hospitals work in favor of the Ultraorthodox (Nissim Dahan, Ultraorthodox pol-

itician and former Minister of Health, interview with author, September 20, 2010).

Third, individual-level religious beliefs can influence policy through politics. In general, hospital managers report that they are rarely subject to political pressures concerning individual religious beliefs. The managers indicate that hospitals have a high level of professional autonomy, which allows them to resist what might be viewed as political-religious encroachment. They report that they do not resent some political intervention on behalf of the religious public. In 2008, intervention by Ghaleb Majadele, Israel's first Muslim minister, led to the opening of the first Muslim prayer room in an Israeli hospital (Rambam Hospital 2008). An interviewee indicated that the hospital's management was supportive. Politicians can also support sacralization through subsidies. For instance, as leader of the Jewish Home, a religious party, and as Minister of Science and Technology, Daniel Hershkowitz established a fund of 600,000 shekels to support research dedicated to the creation of new medical technologies that accommodate religious beliefs (Avi Anati, head of the Science, Technology, and Halacha program, Israeli Ministry of Science and Technology, phone interview with author, November 9, 2010).

Nevertheless, some political initiatives are met with resistance. In 2010, Ultraorthodox Deputy Health Minister Yaakov Litzman demanded that Barzilai hospital change the location chosen for its future emergency room because the original location allegedly sits on the site of an ancient Jewish burial ground. At first, the government adopted Litzman's proposal. However, the proposed relocation would add 90 million shekels to the project's cost, create major construction delays, and move the emergency room to a location far from the rest of the hospital. Following considerable media criticism and extensive local protests against the relocation plan, the prime minister backed down and reapproved the original site (Sofer 2010). In another initiative, Deputy Health Minister Litzman promoted gender segregation of psychiatric wards in Jerusalem hospitals. Despite criticisms from medical professionals that the initiative amounts to segregation, Litzman made it clear that the government will provide hospitals with funding for additional psychiatric beds but that, as a condition of such funding, they must agree to segregate wards by gender. Initially, the Hadassah hospital indicated that it accepts this condition (Peled 2010). However, as of 2012, gender segregation of this type has yet to be implemented.

The ongoing process of internal sacralization is slow and incremental in Israeli public hospitals. Indeed, it is difficult to say how much further it will go. One reason for this is that even the highly religious Ultraorthodox public appears to be quite satisfied with the general hospitals' efforts concerning religious accommodation. Most proposed changes are

marginal. In the Low Countries, internal secularization is tied to the professionalization of medical staff. By contrast, the religious composition of the medical staff has changed little in Israel, and the medical staff's characteristics provide a significant counterweight to growing client and political pressure toward hospital sacralization.

Social Work

Social work targeted at minority populations is a growing concern in developed countries, because there is a rising awareness that effective social work practice often requires cultural sensitivity (Dahan and Aviram 2010). Under conditions in which minorities have a particularly high degree of individual-level religiosity and their share in the general population is on the rise, growth in the cultural sensitivity of practice could result in the sacralization of social work organizations. Is this the case with Israeli social work? To examine the issue, the study focuses on a program that targets at-risk Ultraorthodox youth. The specialization of programs for Ultraorthodox populations represents a broad trend in Israeli social work.[9]

In the past, at-risk treatment for Ultraorthodox youth came, if at all, in mixed programs (a small minority) or within a private, nonprofessional, Ultraorthodox framework. Treatment in mixed facilities that served a diverse general public was problematic not only for professional reasons but also because the Ultraorthodox public, which is highly insular, feared that exposing youth to the secular world might lead them to abandon the Ultraorthodox way of life for a secular one. Because of this fear, they were reluctant to engage with state programs (Tsilka Kreuzer, head of Ultraorthodox Detached Youth Program, Jerusalem Municipality, interview with author, January 19, 2011). In 2001, largely due to Ultraorthodox political pressure, the Ministry of Welfare launched a program to establish 16 out-of-home facilities for Ultraorthodox youth (Zohar Hemo, senior official, Israeli Ministry of Welfare, interview with author, June 19, 2011). In 2009, the ministry budgeted 30 million shekels to support community-based programs for detached Ultraorthodox youth. It allocated 9 million shekels to Jerusalem, which has the largest Ultraorthodox population in the country; according to one estimate, 60 percent of at-risk youth in Jerusalem are Ultraorthodox (youth probation officer, interview with author, July 17, 2011, Jerusalem). In this new program (hereafter, Noham), the Jerusalem municipality cooperates with a range of small, existing Ultraorthodox organizations. The head of the municipality's program is Ultraorthodox, as are the staff of the organizations that partner with the munic-

9. In fact, specialized social programs for other Ultraorthodox groups, such as individuals with cognitive and developmental disabilities, began several years before the programs for the at-risk youth.

ipality. Program goals and practices are coordinated with Ultraorthodox rabbis from the communities in which the programs operate. Needless to say, the different programs conform to Ultraorthodox norms, including a strict separation of men and women (Kreuzer, interview). What explains this change?

First, even before the establishment of Noham, there were steady increases in the share of religious social workers in Jerusalem. This includes Ultraorthodox social workers. In the mid-1990s, university social work schools opened special, separate courses to train Ultraorthodox social workers, and the Ministry of Work and Welfare supported the efforts (Dahan and Aviram 2010). Such developments facilitated growth in the number of Ultraorthodox social workers. Even if professional training might moderate religious influences, the influx of new Ultraorthodox social workers into a service system traditionally dominated by secular workers clearly pushed the system toward organizational sacralization. In response to what they viewed as an unmet need, Ultraorthodox social workers and practitioners functioned as social entrepreneurs and established various frameworks for the reintegration of detached youth into the Ultraorthodox community. Despite the Ultraorthodox community's reservations about contact with the state, these social entrepreneurs initiated relationships with the Jerusalem municipality to receive public financial and professional support (Kreuzer, interview).

Second, the growth of the Ultraorthodox clientele is an important element in this change. Growth rates in Ultraorthodox communities are extraordinary. The share of Jewish children attending Ultraorthodox schools in Jerusalem rose from 53 to 64 percent between 1996 and 2006 (Truen 2007). With the growth in the number of Ultraorthodox children, there is a concurrent increase in dropouts. Ultraorthodox schools for boys concentrate almost exclusively on the study of Jewish texts but provide practically no avenue for applied or vocational studies. Many youth are ill suited for this course of study and, lacking viable alternatives, drop out of the education system. These youth are at high risk for delinquency and antisocial behavior. Thus, the social work system faces mounting pressure to adapt its practices to this population. For example, to receive rabbinical support for efforts to create out-of-home placement arrangements for Ultraorthodox youth, ministry officials agreed that boarding schools would be renamed as Jewish seminaries (yeshivas) and would emphasize Jewish religious studies in their curriculum. Ultraorthodox rabbis also objected to having a social worker onsite.[10] The ministry arrived at a compromise by which the boarding school would include a full-time worker who is trained as a social worker and functions as such but goes by a different title (Hemo, interview).

10. Within Ultraorthodox communities, the traditional view of social workers is negative.

Third, Ultraorthodox political intervention played an important part in the restructuring of the social work system, and the role played by Eli Yishai, leader of the Ultraorthodox Shas party, was pivotal. As minister for work and welfare in the mid-1990s, he sponsored social work training programs for the Ultraorthodox. Also, the coalition agreement between the prime minister and Shas ensured the government's 30-million shekel allocation to Noham (Kreuzer, interview). It should be stressed that Shas is a relatively new party (established in 1984). Its growth and political power are based on its constituency's impressive demographic expansion. Since the early 1990s, the Ministry of Welfare has been headed by an Ultraorthodox minister or deputy minister no fewer than five times. Ultraorthodox political pressure is substantial even in periods when a nonreligious minister heads the ministry. As interviewees argued, this pressure affects both the scope and nature of Ultraorthodox programs.

This example of religiously driven change in the organizational makeup of social work does not represent internal sacralization; extant public services are not transformed from the inside. Instead, the state partners with new, nongovernmental, Ultraorthodox organizations, which both supplement and replace existing organizations. This phenomenon is part of the broader NPM trend: the contracting out of social services (Gal 2010). Responsibility for the treatment of Ultraorthodox youth has moved from nonreligious organizations within the social work infrastructure to new religious ones located outside of that infrastructure. This process can be described as institutional layering. Organizational sacralization is the end result.

Concluding Remarks

The empirical case studies suggest that individual-level religious change indeed affects organizational change along the three paths indicated: workforce influence, client needs and demands, and political intervention that increases or decreases with changes in voter composition. In the Netherlands and Belgium, Catholic hospitals and social work agencies underwent a process of secularization that is primarily manifest as internal secularization. In his Belgian study, Dobbelaere (1979) emphasizes the importance of a secularized professional workforce for internal secularization, and this is borne out by the different cases used to examine secularization here. This study also highlights the importance of welfare clients and political intervention for organizational-level change in welfare delivery organizations. Religious outlook affects welfare client preferences and welfare organizations. As a result of their own volition or the imperative of retaining clients, organizations adjust practices accordingly. Individual-level secularization increases the political power of secularizing politicians and reduces the ability of religious welfare organizations to resist that power.

Quite differently from past studies that focus on secularization, this work suggests that religious change in the organizational dimension can occur in the direction of sacralization and not just secularization. In Israel, the process of sacralization is slow but evident in public institutions. Hospitals, especially those in relatively religious areas, increasingly engage in practices that accommodate religious beliefs. Further progress in this direction is dependent on a change in the religious composition of the workforce and hospital leadership. That change has not happened yet. It also depends on religious groups' promotion of religious goals that go beyond what is already available in public hospitals (e.g., abortions would be allowed only to save a mother's life). The case study of the Israeli hospital suggests that organizational religious change can occur even if the three mechanisms do not work in tandem. However, the lack of workforce sacralization does limit the organizational sacralization effect. In the case of Israeli social work, developments are driven by client needs, the initiatives of religious social workers, and Ultraorthodox party intervention intended to support special programs for the party's constituents. These forces create new institutional arrangements that constitute an organizational form of sacralization but not an internal one.

Have NPM reforms made a difference to the link between individual and organizational religiosity? The answer is affirmative, though this is not evident in all cases. In the Netherlands, growing competition forced hospitals to become more responsive to patient demands. In this context, religious requirements and restrictions become watered down. In Israel, the introduction of competition to the welfare field drove hospitals to court religious clients by accommodating their preferences. In the social work field, the NPM emphasis on contracting out for services offers new religious organizations relatively easy access to state resources. For sacralization to occur under a regime that emphasizes contracting, there is no need to change extant institutions. Rather, new religious agencies are added to the established, nonreligious ones in an institutional layering process. Given that the advent of NPM was inspired by neoliberal thinking, it could be claimed that the neoliberal wave weakened institutional lock-in and indirectly accelerated religious change in welfare institutions.

These mechanisms could of course apply to other welfare domains. Space limitations prevent the inclusion of a case study on schools. Nevertheless, Dobbelaere's (1979) work indicates that internal Catholic school secularization is due primarily to professionalization and secularization of the workforce. Sacralization is quite different. In Israel, it is expressed through a rapid increase in the share of students in religious schools: from the 1989–90 school year to the 2009–10 year, the share of Jewish primary school students who attended Ultraorthodox schools rose from 7.6 to 28.1 percent (Israel Central Bureau of Statistics 2010). Clearly, consumer choice is the main driving force in the Israeli school sacralization process.

In conclusion, it is helpful to return to the alleged difficulty of institutional change in mature welfare states. Welfare states may be resilient, and their programs are often path dependent, but this does not imply that they are impervious to change. A burgeoning literature addresses how politics (parties as well as interest groups) generate change despite institutional rigidities. However, this study differs from other works in the same tradition. The current effort emphasizes the religious dimension and mechanisms that tie changes in society to organizational transformations. The direction of welfare-state organizational change very much depends therefore on the development of social forces. The three mechanisms presented here, demographic change in workforce, clientele, and politics, could be employed to explain how other social trends (e.g., postmaterialism) effect change in a wide range of public organizations (e.g., the military). It is worth mentioning that welfare-state institutions (public or private) are local in character. Thus, one might be well served to examine trends on the local level. Even if society undergoes secularization, a local trend toward sacralization could affect local institutions and create organizational sacralization. Hence, a heterogeneous society implies a heterogeneous welfare state.

Note

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The Effects of Paternal Imprisonment on Children's Economic Well-Being

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The effect of fathers' incarceration on the well-being of children is an important concern, especially in the United States, a nation with uniquely high incarceration rates as well as a relatively weak and shrinking safety net. This study uses matched, longitudinal, administrative data from Wisconsin to estimate the effects of paternal imprisonment on child support and food stamp receipt by families with nonmarital children. The results illustrate the complex interactions among public policies. Paternal imprisonment reduces child support receipt and thereby undermines policies designed to improve child support collection. At the same time, increases in food stamp benefits fill a portion of the resulting income gap, providing a safety net for families but increasing welfare expenditures.

In the context of mass imprisonment, particularly the mass imprisonment of low-income males, a subject of great policy concern is the effect of fathers' imprisonment on the child support and welfare benefits received by the families these fathers leave behind. Policies enacted after the passage of the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 (US Public Law 104-193) attempt to strengthen child support enforcement and to restrict the welfare benefits available to single-mother families by imposing time limits on benefit receipt, tightening eligibility constraints, and increasing work requirements. An important goal behind these reforms is to increase the role of noncustodial fathers in supporting their children. Unfortunately, widespread paternal imprisonment may diminish the success of policies designed to improve child support collection and reduce welfare expenditures. It may also create a context in which welfare reform increases the economic vulnerability of many disadvantaged children. Understanding the ways in which the criminal justice system interacts with child support and welfare policies thus is critical.

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This study explores the effects of paternal imprisonment on child support and welfare outcomes. It focuses on children born outside of marriage (hereafter, nonmarital children) because of the societal and public policy concern over this group. Nonmarital children accounted for nearly 41 percent of all children born in the United States during 2010 (Hamilton, Martin, and Ventura 2011). These children face particularly notable economic hardships (Grall 2009; Magnuson and Votruba-Drzal 2009; McLanahan 2009) and an especially high risk of paternal imprisonment (Western, Lopoo, and McLanahan 2004; Waller and Swisher 2006). A recent study reports that paternal imprisonment touches approximately 15 percent of the first-born children of unwed mothers in Wisconsin by age 5 (Chung 2011). Further, the majority of children with incarcerated fathers are nonmarital children (Mumola 2000).

Two additional factors heighten the importance of focusing on nonmarital children. First, policy changes in welfare and child support disproportionately affect this group of children; second, these children are the focus of the political debates that drive changes in key social policies. Such changes eventually affect a broader group of children and their families (Sparks 2003).

This article uses unique data from Wisconsin to estimate the effects of fathers' imprisonment on the formal child support and food stamp benefits received by the families of 5,550 nonmarital children. Administrative data from the state's child support enforcement system are matched to date-specific imprisonment records for both children's biological fathers and the fathers of the children's half-siblings.

This study makes several unique contributions to the literature. First, it uses detailed records on imprisonment, child support, and welfare to expand on recent work concerning the role of incarceration in reducing fathers' financial contributions to their families (Cancian, Noyes, et al. 2009; Geller, Garfinkel, and Western 2011). It addresses the interactions among paternal imprisonment, reduced paternal support, and increased welfare receipt by families. Second, the research makes a contribution in suggesting that paternal imprisonment is an important omitted variable in much of the existing literature on the determinants of welfare receipt. Third, this study contributes to the literature on paternal imprisonment by considering the imprisonment of the fathers of focal children's half-siblings (other male partners of the mothers). This is the first study in the field to conduct this type of analysis, and the innovation is important because a high proportion of unwed mothers have children with more than one partner (Carlson and Furstenberg 2006; Cancian, Meyer, and Cook 2011). Due to reduced support and family resources, the imprisonment of subsequent partners can have negative effects on all the mother's children (Berger et al. 2008; Berger and Langton 2011). Finally, the study testifies to the importance of a cross-systems approach. It considers welfare

as a collateral cost of imprisonment and provides empirical evidence of the relationship between paternal imprisonment and welfare. The study also highlights prevalent paternal imprisonment as a key context that can determine the consequences of child support and welfare policies for children and families and that therefore should be considered in the design and planning of these policies.

Literature Review

The current study explores child support and welfare benefits as key components of the mechanisms through which fathers' imprisonment affects the economic resources available to unwed mothers and their children. It views welfare participation as a sensible response by low-income mothers to the potential economic shock resulting from the imprisonment of their partners. Although the federal Food Stamp Program is the specific welfare program considered in this study, the theoretical focus falls on the broader welfare system. The discussion of welfare in this section thus is not restricted to food stamps.

Reduced child support is a potentially important mechanism through which high rates of paternal imprisonment may negatively affect many nonmarital children and their families (Sorensen and Zibman 2001; Ha et al. 2008; Cancian, Noyes, et al. 2009; Grall 2009; Nepomnyaschy and Garfinkel 2010). Amid the decline in public support available to unemployed single mothers and growing emphasis on child support enforcement, child support has become an increasingly important source of income for the families of nonmarital children (Cancian and Meyer 2006). If a father would provide child support but imprisonment prevents him from doing so, his incarceration may force a reduction in formal support that places his nonmarital children, already socially and economically disadvantaged, at an even higher risk of economic hardship.[1]

However, the extent to which fathers' imprisonment influences the child support received by nonmarital children's families is an empirical issue that remains largely unexamined. Paternal imprisonment may have a minimal economic effect on nonmarital children if the incarcerated fathers of these children, fathers who tend to have low economic capacities, would have provided negligible child support even without experiencing imprisonment. Although previous empirical studies show high rates of incarceration among nonpayers (Sorensen and Zibman 2001; Ha et al. 2008), few studies provide information on the trajectories of fathers'

1. That risk may also have negative effects on their short- and long-term emotional, psychological, and developmental well-being (Johnston 1995; Brooks-Gunn and Duncan 1997; Argys et al. 1998; Hagan and Dinovitzer 1999; Travis and Waul 2003; Swisher and Waller 2008; Geller et al. 2009; Poehlmann 2009; Western and Wildeman 2009; Wakefield and Uggen 2010; Geller et al. 2011).

child support payments prior to, during, and following incarceration, or otherwise estimate the effects of fathers' incarceration on child support. Expanding upon several recent studies that begin to explore analytically the connection between incarceration and fathers' financial contributions (Cancian, Noyes, et al. 2009; Geller et al. 2011), the current study focuses on the formal child support received by families with incarcerated fathers and analyzes the implications of reduced paternal support for welfare receipt.

Paternal imprisonment's influence on the welfare benefits received by families is of interest from at least two different, possibly even incompatible, viewpoints. If welfare is intended to serve as a vital safety net, an important question is whether children impoverished because of paternal imprisonment are then served by the welfare system. Conversely, if welfare participation is associated with long-term harm to children, or if the focus is on a negative incentive effect (i.e., that welfare discourages mothers' work), increased welfare reliance may be an important, although unintentional, negative consequence of the father's imprisonment. Regardless of which perspective is adopted, it is important for scholars and policy makers to consider the possible role of paternal imprisonment in increasing welfare expenditures.

The current study also may aid criminal justice researchers who seek to assess the external costs of incarceration. Cost-benefit analyses of incarceration usually do not consider the relationship between incarceration and welfare (Lengyel 2006; Ziebert 2006; Vining and Weimer 2010). If incarceration increases welfare reliance among the families left behind, then the external costs of incarceration for taxpayers may be underestimated.

Little empirical research relates paternal incarceration to families' welfare use, although many studies trace welfare participation to such factors as individual-level socioeconomic and demographic characteristics, alcohol and drug abuse, national and local economic opportunities, welfare policy features, and child support system attributes (Plotnick 1983; McLanahan 1988; Moffitt 1992; Meyer 1993; Blank and Ruggles 1996; Gottschalk 1996; Miller and Sanders 1997; Hoynes 2000; Klawitter, Plotnick, and Edwards 2000; Schmidt and McCarty 2000; Gundersen and Oliveira 2001; Huang, Kunz, and Garfinkel 2002; Currie 2003; Grogger 2004; Grogger and Karoly 2005; Teitler, Reichman, and Nepomnyaschy 2007; Ribar, Edelhoch, and Liu 2008). If the causal variables of interest are associated with fathers' imprisonment, and if imprisonment influences welfare receipt, then estimates of the causal effects on welfare likely suffer from omitted variable bias.

Methodological difficulties impede research into the effects of paternal imprisonment on child support and food stamp receipt by nonmarital children's families. For example, representative data on nonmarital

children's fathers are scarce, and most surveys provide inaccurate or insufficient information on fathers' incarceration (Johnston 1995; Johnson and Waldfogel 2002). Much research focuses on the use of child support enforcement as a way to avoid welfare expenditures (Barnow et al. 2000; Huang, Garfinkel, and Waldfogel 2004). However, scholarship rarely discusses the ways in which imprisonment can simultaneously affect child support and welfare benefits; these issues merit further research.

Theoretical Framework

Paternal Imprisonment and Child Support Received by Families

Previous research suggests that paternal imprisonment's effects on child support payments can be modeled using a framework that includes three mechanisms: (*a*) fathers' ability to pay, (*b*) fathers' willingness to pay, and (*c*) child support enforcement (Weiss and Willis 1985; Beller and Graham 1993; Graham and Beller 2002; Bartfeld and Meyer 2003; Cancian, Meyer, and Caspar 2008; Meyer, Ha, and Hu 2008). As the first mechanism suggests, fathers' imprisonment may negatively affect child support payments because most incarcerated fathers have little or no earnings and generally cannot provide financial support for their children. Also, employment levels, earnings, and earnings growth after release tend to be lower than before incarceration because incarceration reduces human and social capital, stigmatizes the individual, and prevents access to career-type jobs (Nagin and Waldfogel 1998; Western 2002, 2006; Pettit and Western 2004).

The second mechanism, fathers' willingness to pay support, may also play a role in paternal imprisonment's relationship with child support; imprisonment may reduce child support by reducing fathers' willingness to pay. For example, imprisonment may weaken family bonds, limiting fathers' involvement in their children's lives during imprisonment and also after release (Western et al. 2004; Lopoo and Western 2005; Geller et al. 2011). Less directly, fathers tend to accrue large child support debts during imprisonment, and such debts may reduce their willingness to make child support payments if they have little hope of paying off the debts (Noyes 2006; Levingston and Turetsky 2007; Cancian, Heinrich, and Chung 2009; Harris, Evans, and Beckett 2010).

The third mechanism, child support enforcement, may affect imprisonment's relationship with support if incarceration initiates or deepens the involvement of the formal child support enforcement system in fathers' provision of child support to their children. Several factors suggest that this mechanism may cause fathers' imprisonment to have positive effects on their child support payments. In many states, the criminal justice system cooperates with the child support enforcement

system. Although no estimates are available, anecdotal evidence suggests that imprisonment sometimes leads to a new child support order if no prior order exists and to the enforcement of the support order following the father's release (Noyes 2006).[2] Additionally, supervision by the criminal justice system (e.g., monitoring child support compliance as part of parole arrangements) may lead some fathers to work in the formal labor market, and child support is automatically deducted from paychecks. If such supervision forces a father into the formal labor market, that participation can be expected to increase his child support payments. Moreover, many states have criminalized the nonpayment of child support over the last few decades and made nonpayment a parole violation. The threat of incarceration (or reincarceration) for child support nonpayment can extract hidden money from fathers and thus may also increase some fathers' child support payments (Swisher and Waller 2008).

However, if punitive child support enforcement tools, such as revocation of driving and professional licenses and seizure of property, are utilized for incarcerated or recently released fathers and make it hard for these fathers to work, this third mechanism may result in a reduction in their child support payments. In sum, although paternal imprisonment leads in some cases to the initiation or reinforcement of child support enforcement and the threat of imprisonment for nonpayment of child support can increase fathers' child support payments, most evidence on the three mechanisms suggests that imprisonment decreases child support.

Paternal Imprisonment and Food Stamp Benefits Received by Families

In estimating the effects of fathers' imprisonment on welfare benefits, the current analysis focuses specifically on the Food Stamp Program, which distributes means-tested benefits that are almost as helpful as cash for low-income families.[3] The program stands in this study as an emblematic example of welfare, and food stamp benefits serve as the focal welfare variable here because food stamp benefits are more accessible than Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) cash benefits. So, too, food stamp benefits are more stable over time and across states, and they are less influenced by local political contexts that may also affect incarcera-

2. In certain cases, an increase in child support payments does not represent a change in the overall economic contributions of a father to his children. There may be cases in which imprisonment ends the relationship between cohabiting parents; formal child support payments therefore increase, but overall economic support remains the same or declines.

3. In 2008, the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act (122 Stat. 923) renamed the Food Stamp Program as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program. The current study uses the program's former name because the study's data come from the period prior to the name change.

tion rates. Food stamps account for a higher proportion of the total aid provided to low-income families (Beckett and Western 2001; Wolkwitz 2007; Scholz, Moffitt, and Cowan 2009).

The Food Stamp Program is a federally funded effort to help low-income households obtain a nutritious diet by increasing their food purchasing power (US Department of Agriculture 2010). The program is means-tested. To be eligible, an applicant is required to have a gross income below 130 percent of the federal poverty line and a net income below 100 percent of that amount. An applicant's countable assets must also be below a specified amount. Because the program imposes few nonfinancial eligibility criteria and has much more lenient work requirements than TANF, it is considered the only income assistance program that potentially serves all financially vulnerable households in the United States (Issar 2010).

Economic theory suggests that fathers' imprisonment and the subsequent reductions in the formal support to unwed mothers will increase the food stamp benefits received by mothers (Becker and Barro 1988; Becker 1991; Currie 2003; Kang, Huffman, and Jensen 2004). If imprisonment reduces the economic support fathers provide to their families, the reduction is a negative shock to mothers' overall income. This shock may be associated with an increase in mothers' earnings, although the increase may not completely compensate for the income loss. The resulting total income reduction could change mothers' food stamp eligibility and benefit levels. Some mothers who already receive food stamp benefits could become eligible for higher levels of benefits; others whose newly reduced income now falls below the cutoff for eligibility may pursue food stamp participation. Although welfare may be irrelevant for mothers with high wages, empirical studies show that it is not irrelevant for a majority of unwed mothers (McLanahan 2009).

Data and Methods

The underlying hypothesis in this study is that paternal imprisonment reduces formal child support payments, and, in turn, this reduction and other economic stress associated with paternal imprisonment increase the amount of food stamps received by custodial mothers. To test this hypothesis, the analysis follows the families of a sample of first-born nonmarital children (focal children). The sample is limited to children whose fathers were not in prison during the first 3 years of the child's life. By implementing this restriction and controlling for some economic outcomes during the prenatal period and in the first 3 years of the focal children's lives, the analysis estimates the effects of paternal imprisonment in the fourth year after the focal child's birth (or year 4) on subsequent economic outcomes (i.e., those in year 5).

Data

The study draws on a unique, matched set of longitudinal administrative data from Wisconsin. The data include detailed information about paternity and multiple-partner fertility from the administrative records of the state's child support enforcement system (the Kids Information Data System, or KIDS). Also included is such demographic information as the child's race and date of birth. The data are matched with date-specific imprisonment records from the Wisconsin Department of Corrections for 1997–2007. The resulting data set is used to determine the imprisonment status of the nonmarital children's biological fathers and of the fathers of the focal children's half-siblings (i.e., those who share mothers with focal children). The data are also matched with data from the Client Assistance for Re-employment and Economic Support system to identify mothers' participation in the Food Stamp Program and TANF between 1996 and 2008. Finally, data from the Unemployment Insurance system are matched with the data set to obtain information about mothers' and fathers' formal earnings between 1996 and 2008.

The matched administrative data offer some important advantages for studying the effects of paternal imprisonment on the economic outcomes of nonmarital children's families. First, the data contain fairly complete information on fathers of nonmarital children, including information about fathers' imprisonment statuses (Cancian et al. 2011). The high representation of nonmarital births in KIDS is achieved in part because KIDS contains information about families that contact the child support agency for help establishing paternity, locating a noncustodial parent, establishing a child support order, or collecting support. But further, the high representation is achieved because the system also includes information about families that apply for welfare (because their welfare cases must be referred to the child support agency). Building on research that compares nonmarital cases included in KIDS with birth records (Brown and Cook 2008) and on other related studies (Cancian et al. 2011; Chung 2011), the current analysis estimates that the KIDS data include information on approximately 77 percent of the biological fathers partnered to Wisconsin mothers whose first-born nonmarital child was born between 1998 and 2002. The coverage of nonmarital children, although not perfect, is quite good compared with the coverage in social surveys. Moreover, the administrative data provide relatively accurate information about fathers' imprisonment status, and there is relatively little attrition over time. A final advantage of the data is the ability to identify the imprisonment of all fathers tied to a mother who has children with more than one partner. By contrast, the Fragile Families and Child Wellbeing Study, for example, provides information about multiple-partner fertility and the imprisonment of the biological fathers of the children being studied but lacks information about the imprisonment of fathers of the children's half-siblings.

Samples

This study begins with a stratified sample of 8,720 mothers who were not married when they gave birth to their first child in Wisconsin between 1998 and 2002. The sample is stratified to overrepresent mothers of children with incarcerated fathers; when appropriately weighted, the sample is representative of mothers who were not married at the time of their first birth, which occurred during the time considered. The final sample is further restricted to 5,550 mothers of focal children whose biological father did not experience imprisonment before the child reached age 3 and whose half-siblings' father had no experience of it before the focal child reached that age.

All cases meet the following selection criteria: the mother was the custodial parent for 5 years following the focal child's birth, the child's date of birth is known, the biological father is known, and the records establish the focal child's paternity within 5 years of the child's birth. Unless otherwise noted, all results are weighted according to the sampling scheme. The final base sample consists of 5,550 mother–focal child pairs that are associated with 5,232 biological fathers of focal children; among these fathers, 292 (5.5 percent) are the biological fathers of more than one focal child in the sample (standard errors are adjusted accordingly).

The base analysis includes 46 fathers (when the sample is weighted, it includes 6.5 percent of those imprisoned in year 4) whose imprisonment is associated with the nonpayment of child support (in half of these cases, child support nonpayment is the only indicated offense). Because imprisonment for nonpayment of child support may be endogenous to the factors that affect fathers' prior financial contributions and the varying characteristics of child support enforcement policies, these 46 cases impose a methodological challenge in estimating the effect of imprisonment on child support. In an alternative analysis using a sample that excludes these 46 cases, the point estimates of key coefficients are quite similar to the base estimates (see table A1 in the appendix, test 8).

Key Measures

In the analysis, the baseline is the birth of the focal children, and outcomes are measured against this baseline. A binary variable is created to measure fathers' imprisonment in year 4; the variable equals one if any of the partners with whom the mother had children was imprisoned any time during the fourth year following the focal child's birth, and zero otherwise. The focus is on paternal imprisonment in year 4, rather than imprisonment in earlier years, because child support is one of the key dependent variables, and establishing child support orders takes time. The choice to focus on fathers' imprisonment in year 4 reinforces the importance of considering the imprisonment of the fathers of focal chil-

dren's half-siblings because the number of focal children who share a mother with a half-sibling increases over time (Cancian et al. 2011).

Monthly variables are constructed to measure annual child support and food stamp benefits; the calendar month of the focal child's birth is counted as the first month. Then, annual outcomes are constructed by summing figures for the pertinent 12 months. Information about formal earnings comes from the Unemployment Insurance system but is available only as quarterly data. To create figures for the time shortly after the focal child's birth, monthly earnings are calculated by dividing quarterly earnings by three, and then annual variables are calculated using these monthly figures. Because any child support received by the mother affects the well-being of the mother and all her children, and because the primary analysis considers the imprisonment of both biological fathers and fathers of the focal children's half-siblings, the analysis includes all formal child support received by mothers. This support includes payments from all partners with whom the mothers had children. All financial data are adjusted for inflation to December 2008 dollars using the Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers.

Information about the county in which each child resides comes from KIDS. Following the strategy used by Maria Cancian and colleagues (2011), this study analyzes the counties of residence in three categories: Milwaukee County, other urban counties (the 24 counties that are part of Metropolitan Statistical Areas), and rural counties (all other counties). Milwaukee is categorized as a separate urban county because the risk of paternal imprisonment is particularly high there (Chung 2011) and because of its unique demographic characteristics. In 2010, blacks constituted only 6.3 percent of the total state population but nearly 27 percent of Milwaukee residents (US Census Bureau 2011). About one-third of nonmarital births in Wisconsin occur in Milwaukee County (Cancian et al. 2011).

Analytic Strategies

Identifying the causal effects of paternal imprisonment on families' economic outcomes is challenging. In part, this is because characteristics of imprisoned fathers are correlated with the characteristics of their children's mothers. Mothers do not randomly select partners with differing propensities for imprisonment. For example, mothers with less human capital may receive less child support, collect higher welfare benefits, and be more likely to be poor; they may also be more likely to have children with a father who becomes imprisoned or to have a child with one who faces a longer sentence. Therefore, observed differences in economic outcomes across groups of mothers with different experiences of a partner's imprisonment may not be due solely to the partner's imprisonment. Identifying causal effects also is challenging because certain patterns emerge

over time in families' economic outcomes. For example, average child support payments and food stamp benefits tend to increase over time, at least in the first few years after the child's birth. Thus, one cannot presume that all differences in families' economic outcomes before and after fathers' imprisonment are attributable to fathers' imprisonment.

Therefore, to estimate the effects of fathers' imprisonment on their families' economic outcomes, this study employs various empirical strategies. The robustness of the results is tested by examining different assumptions and alternative specifications. The study first completes bivariate analysis and then employs difference-in-difference (DD) methods. Fixed effects models are utilized to test the sensitivity of results.

Primary multivariate analysis: DD methods.—The primary analysis employs a DD method in which outcomes are compared for two groups in two time periods. Specifically, the difference between year-2 and year-5 economic outcomes for children with fathers imprisoned in year 4 is compared to the difference for those with fathers who were not imprisoned in year 4. Economic outcomes are measured for years 2 and 5, instead of years 3 and 5, because imprisonment in year 4 may be associated with such year-3 events as arrest, detention, and trial. Economic outcomes in years 2 and 5 represent pre- and postimprisonment economic outcomes. This method helps to remove biases (in comparisons of economic outcomes) that could be a result of permanent differences between the two groups as well as biases stemming from economic outcome comparisons over time among families that experienced paternal imprisonment in year 4 (Wooldridge 2007). Separate models are run for the annual amounts of child support and food stamps received by families. The primary analysis includes 11,100 observations (economic outcomes for 5,550 mothers observed in two time periods). A generalized estimating equation is employed to conduct the analysis while adjusting the standard errors to account for cases in which a father was the biological father of more than one focal child in the sample (i.e., cases in which the outcome variable of more than one observation is potentially correlated); to implement the generalized estimating equation, SAS statistical software's "procgenmod" procedure is used.

Equation (1) shows the underlying DD models for child support and food stamps:

$$y_{it}^{j} = \alpha + \alpha_1 d_t + \alpha_2 d^j + \alpha_3 d_t^j + \mathbf{X}_{it'}^{j}\delta + \varepsilon_{it}^{j}, \qquad (1)$$

where y_{it}^{j} is the annual amount of child support or food stamps received by mother i (from 1 to 5,550) in group j in period t; j is 1 if the family experienced paternal imprisonment in year 4 and 0 otherwise; t is 0 for year 2 (the first time period considered) and 1 for year 5 (the second time period considered); d_t is 1 if t equals 1 and 0 otherwise; d^j is 1 if j equals 1 and 0 otherwise; d_t^j is 1 if j equals 1 and t equals 1, and 0 otherwise; $\mathbf{X}_{it'}^{j}$ is a vec-

tor of control variables for mother i, group j, and period t' (detailed explanations below, including specified t' for variables); δ is the DD estimate for the effect of paternal imprisonment on child support or food stamps (the coefficient of key interest in the study); α, α_1, α_2, and α_3 are other coefficient vectors; and ε^j_{it} is a random error term.

The variables represented by function X deserve further discussion. The analysis controls for a range of variables concerning the focal children's mothers and biological fathers (biological fathers' characteristics are used as proxies for the characteristics of the mothers' partners) to reduce the remaining bias and to improve the efficiency of estimates by reducing the residual variance (Meyer 1995; Wooldridge 2007). The child support and food stamp models use similar sets of control variables.[4] The time-constant control variables used across models include the annual earnings of both the mother and the focal father in year 1; the races of the mother and the focal father; the ages of the mother and the focal father; the county of the focal child's residence; the year of the focal child's birth; whether the mother received any TANF cash benefits in year 1; and whether the mother received any food stamp benefits from 1 year before the focal child's birth until 1 year after it. In addition, the child support models include control variables indicating the establishment of the focal father's paternity, his child support orders, and his child support payments in year 1. The food stamp models do not include such controls (see table A1, test 3, for an alternative food stamp analysis that also includes these control variables; results remain robust).

Time-varying controls used across models include the total number of children and whether the mother had any other child with any other partner. These variables are measured at the end of year 1 and year 3 (points that represent the beginning and end of the preimprisonment period). The controls correspond to those used for the first and second time periods. The study also controls for variables related to mothers' fertility. These are measured at the end of year 1 and year 3, instead of year 1 and year 4, because these outcomes may be influenced by fathers' imprisonment during year 4.

The primary analytic strategy, the DD method, has limitations. If time-varying events affect those whose partners experienced imprisonment differently than they affect those whose partners did not, DD estimates may be biased. Therefore, an alternative DD model is conducted that includes time-varying measures of formal earnings for mothers and fathers. To the extent that mothers' or fathers' earnings are also associated with these events, the measures should account for some of the influence of these time-varying events (see table A1, test 7). In addition, fixed effects

4. In reduced-form models, particularly those using administrative data when a relatively limited number of variables are available and most of the variables are utilized (as in this study), the approach of using a similar set of control variables in models for child support and food stamp benefits follows the tradition of the literature (Cancian et al. 2008).

methods (discussed further below) are used to test the sensitivity of results.

Multivariate sensitivity analysis: fixed effects methods.—The advantage of fixed effects methods lies in their ability to control for all time-constant characteristics of individuals, whether the characteristics are observed or not (Allison 2005). The model serves to examine the robustness of the DD results, although a fixed effects analysis cannot account for unobserved changes that occur in family circumstances over time and that affect both fathers' imprisonment and changes in the family's economic outcomes (e.g., job loss or shifts in relationship status). Specifically, this alternative analysis employs the change score method (Allison 2005, 253; Morgan and Winship 2007); the dependent variable used in this model captures differences in economic outcomes between year 2 and year 5. Difference scores are used for all time-varying control variables. Consistent with the base DD models, the effects of paternal imprisonment are modeled separately for annual child support and food stamp benefits.

Characteristics of Wisconsin Cases and Implications for Generalizability

Because the data used here come from a single state, knowing the characteristics of Wisconsin cases is essential for understanding the implications of these results for other regions. Some of the state's demographic and economic characteristics are similar to characteristics in other regions; however, the population is somewhat less urban and less racially and ethnically diverse than the populations of other states (Meyer et al. 2008; US Census Bureau 2010). Although information is available on the risk of paternal imprisonment among nonmarital children in Wisconsin (Chung 2011), the author knows of no national estimate of the paternal imprisonment risk among nonmarital children. Although imprisonment rates in Wisconsin are generally lower than in national estimates, the implications of this comparison for nonmarital children's fathers are unclear. In part, this is because Wisconsin's racial disparity in imprisonment is notable (compared with national estimates, the state's imprisonment rates are higher among blacks and lower among whites; Oliver and Yocom 2002) and because nonmarital children are more likely to have fathers in racial minority groups than are marital children (West and Sabol 2009). Evidence suggests that Wisconsin's child support enforcement system is more effective than systems in many other states (Sorensen and Zibman 2001; Council of State Governments 2009). In states where child support enforcement is less effective, fathers' imprisonment may cause a smaller reduction in child support payments; for example, fathers in such states may pay less child support prior to imprisonment than they would in states with effective enforcement.

The full pass-through policy in Wisconsin's child support system deserves consideration. To cover the cost of providing welfare benefits, most

states keep all child support paid on behalf of children on welfare. Wisconsin, in contrast, has a full pass-through policy; all formal support collected for Wisconsin children on welfare passes through the system to the child's caregiver. Wisconsin implemented the policy between 1997 and 2006, so most of the mothers in this analysis received all child support payments made on behalf of their children during the study period, regardless of whether or not they received welfare (Cancian et al. 2008). This difference in child support policies has implications for studies in states without pass-through policies. First, under a no-pass-through policy, mothers who received food stamp benefits prior to fathers' imprisonment have no child support to lose if a noncustodial father is imprisoned, because the state retained all child support paid by the fathers prior to imprisonment. Second, if a father pays support prior to imprisonment, the family has less incentive to participate in welfare than it would under a policy by which the state retains none of the support paid, because under a no-pass-through policy, obtaining welfare benefits means losing child support; therefore, studies of states without a pass-through policy may find greater increases in food stamp benefits following the fathers' imprisonment than does the current study.

Overall, Wisconsin's specific characteristics have complex implications for the results, and it is not possible to determine the ultimate direction of any bias. Although the data used in this study are limited to Wisconsin, and thus there are limits on the extent to which these results can be generalized to nonmarital children's families in other states, a case study of Wisconsin may be particularly relevant for policy making because the state is an important experimental site for national public policies.

Results

Sample Characteristics

Table 1 includes summary data on the characteristics of the primary sample. Results suggest that approximately 3 percent of mothers experienced the imprisonment of at least one partner in year 4. Estimates (not shown) indicate that 14 percent of these mothers reportedly experienced the imprisonment of a subsequent partner (or partners) but not the imprisonment of the focal child's biological father; 1 percent reportedly experienced the imprisonment of both the focal child's father and a subsequent partner (or partners). Without this study's unique data on the imprisonment of the fathers of children's half-siblings, the 14 percent of mothers who experienced a partner's (but not focal partner's) imprisonment in year 4 would not be identified as having experienced a partner's imprisonment. Nearly 24 percent of the mothers in the sample had additional children by the time the focal child turned 4; about 14 percent

reportedly had additional children only by the same father; over 9 percent had one or more children with one or more additional partners. (In the fifth year, 71 percent of sampled mothers are found to receive some child support and 53 percent are found to receive some food stamp benefits; see table A2 in the appendix.)

Sampled mothers are generally very young: over 60 percent were younger than age 20 at the time of the focal child's birth (table 1). The focal children's biological fathers are, on average, somewhat older than the mothers, but the age difference between the mother and the focal father is reportedly less than 2 years in about 47 percent of the cases. Of the sampled mothers, 62 percent are white, 22 percent are black, and 5 percent are Hispanic; racial information is missing for 9 percent of the sample. Estimates that examine the parents' races in combination suggest that 44 percent of sampled couples include two white parents and 20 percent include two black parents.

As table 1 shows, most mothers (about 83 percent) had formal (recorded) earnings in year 1 (the rate remains at over 80 percent in the first 6 years following the birth; see appendix table A2). In year 1, nearly 70 percent of mothers had formal annual earnings under $10,000. Focal fathers' recorded annual earnings are generally higher than those of mothers; about 55 percent of fathers had formal earnings under $10,000 in year 1. However, the proportion of fathers who had no formal earnings in that year is somewhat higher than the proportion of mothers without reported earnings. The data indicate that 47 percent of mothers received food stamp benefits between 1 year prior to the focal child's birth and 1 year after it; if TANF benefits received in year 1 are included, 51 percent of mothers are estimated to receive benefits from one or both programs.

Bivariate Analysis

Table 2 includes the results of simple bivariate analysis for annual child support and food stamp benefits received by the two groups, which differ by experience with partner imprisonment. The first group includes mothers who experienced the imprisonment of any partner in year 4, and the second includes those who did not (by construction, neither group experienced partner imprisonment between the time of the focal child's birth and the child's third year). For families experiencing paternal imprisonment in year 4, the annual amounts of child support received in years 4 and 5 are substantially lower than that received in year 3. In contrast, there is a smooth increase in child support for families that did not experience paternal imprisonment. This pattern is suggestive of the effects of paternal imprisonment on child support. However, the pattern for food stamp benefits is less clear.

Table 1

DESCRIPTION OF SAMPLE CHARACTERISTICS

Variable	$t = 1$	$t = 2$	$t = 3$
Mother with any imprisoned partner in year 4	2.94		
Mother's family characteristics at year t after focal child's birth:*			
Any subsequent children	1.06	18.01	23.58
Any children by same father; no children by another partner	.86	11.97	14.19
With one subsequent partner	.20	6.01	9.16
With more than one subsequent partner	.00	.03	.23
Focal father's paternity, child support order, and payment in year t:†			
No paternity established by end of year t	31.38	6.94	2.40
Paternity established by year t, no support orders in year t	25.05	11.91	7.97
Paternity established by year t, child support owed; no payment made in year t	10.02	17.31	21.69
Paternity established by year t, child support owed; payments made in year t	33.56	63.84	67.94
Age of mother at focal child's birth:			
Under 18	19.13		
18–20	42.00		
21–23	21.78		
24–27	9.03		
28–39	7.79		
≥40	.27		
Age of focal father at focal child's birth:			
Under 18	8.36		
18–20	29.32		
1–23	25.94		
24–27	17.67		
28–39	16.52		
≥40	2.19		
Age of focal father in relation to mother's age:			
10+ years younger	.32		
5–9 years younger	1.40		
2–4 years younger	4.88		
Same age (±2 years)	46.66		
2–4 years older	26.28		
5–9 years older	14.63		
≥10 years older	5.83		
Race of mother:			
Black	21.94		
White	61.65		
Hispanic	4.57		
Other‡	2.79		
Missing	9.05		
Race of focal father:			
Black	28.88		
White	50.87		
Hispanic	7.23		
Other	2.98		
Missing	10.04		

Table 1 (*Continued*)

Variable	$t = 1$	$t = 2$	$t = 3$
Both white	44.44		
Both Hispanic	2.70		
Mother white, father black	6.47		
Mother white, father Hispanic	3.63		
All other combinations	6.74		
Either unknown	15.92		
Mother's formal earnings in year 1:			
Zero quarters of earnings	16.96		
$1–4,999	34.29		
$5,000–9,999	18.74		
$10,000–19,999	20.28		
≥$20,000	9.73		
Focal father's formal earnings in year 1:			
Zero quarters of earnings	20.73		
$1–4,999	21.45		
$5,000–9,999	12.94		
$10,000–19,999	18.90		
≥$20,000	25.98		
County of focal child's residence:			
Milwaukee	28.94		
Urban counties	46.66		
Rural counties	24.40		
Year of focal child's birth:			
1998	19.92		
1999	19.99		
2000	20.58		
2001	20.63		
2002	18.88		
Any food stamp receipt from 1 year before focal child's birth to 1 year after	46.88		
Any TANF cash benefit receipt in year 1	24.45		
Any food stamps or TANF cash benefits during time considered	50.50		

SOURCE.—Wisconsin administrative data.

NOTE.—Results are percentages. $N = 5{,}550$ focal child–mother pairs. Baseline is the birth of the mother's first-born nonmarital child; outcomes are measured against this baseline, and weights are applied. All monetary amounts are adjusted to December 2008 dollars.

* t refers to the time elapsed (in years) following the baseline.

† The categories of the variable were constructed hierarchically in the order listed.

‡ Other includes Asian Americans, Pacific Islanders, and Native Americans.

Multivariate Analysis: DD Analysis

Table 3 shows the results of the DD analysis. These models provide a formal test of whether the two groups (mothers with imprisoned partners and those without) differ with respect to the change in economic outcomes over time (from year 2 to year 5), and the models control for other covariates. The annual amounts of formal child support and food stamps are estimated separately.

Table 2

Annual Economic Outcomes by Paternal Imprisonment Experience in Year 4

	Annual Child Support Received from All Fathers						Annual Food Stamps Received					
	All Mothers		Mothers with Any IP in Year 4		Mothers with No IP in Year 4		All Mothers		Mothers with Any IP in Year 4		Mothers with No IP in Year 4	
	Mean $	% of Any	Mean $	% of Any	Mean $	% of Any	Mean $	% of Any	Mean $	% of Any	Mean $	% of Any
Year 1	500	34	141**	21**	511	35	824	44	1,540**	65**	802	43
Year 2	1,404	57	477**	40**	1,432	57	871	48	1,598**	70**	849	47
Year 3	1,718	65	586**	49**	1,752	66	1,029	51	1,880**	74**	1,004	50
Year 4	1,916	69	437**	45**	1,961	70	1,151	53	2,194**	78**	1,119	52
Year 5	2,028	71	537**	51**	2,073	72	1,217	53	2,279**	78**	1,185	52
UWN	5,550		720		4,830		5,550		720		4,830	
WN	5,550		163		5,387		5,550		163		5,387	

Source.—Wisconsin administrative data.

Note.—IP = imprisoned partner; UWN = unweighted number of observations; WN = weighted number of observations. $N = 5{,}550$ focal child–mother pairs. Baseline is the birth of mother's first-born nonmarital child; outcomes are measured against this baseline, and weights are applied. Monetary amounts are adjusted to December 2008 dollars.

** Results differ statistically significantly from those for mothers with no imprisoned partners ($p < .01$).

The terms for the time × imprisonment interaction represent estimates of the effects of fathers' imprisonment. The models control for the influence of time and preexisting group differences in economic outcomes. The results suggest that paternal imprisonment reduces child support by $701 per year and increases food stamp benefits by $208 per year. The coefficients for time, which covers mothers with and without an imprisoned partner, stem from comparison of economic outcomes in year 5 (the postimprisonment period) with those in year 2 (the preimprisonment period). The estimates suggest that mothers received $563 more in child support in year 5 and $181 more in food stamps in that year. The imprisonment group coefficient represents the time-invariant difference in overall means for economic outcomes between families that experienced a father's imprisonment and those that did not. Compared with families that did not experience a father's imprisonment in year 4, those that experienced a father's imprisonment in that year are estimated to receive $221 less in child support and $233 more in food stamps.

The estimates for other parameters in the models (table 3) are generally consistent with prior research. The total child support received by families is estimated to be higher for mothers with multiple partners than for those with only one; it is estimated to be higher for cases in which both the mother and the focal father are white than for cases in which both the mother and the focal father are black or Hispanic. Support is positively correlated with mother's earnings. Finally, the total child support received by families is positively associated with establishment of the focal father's paternity in year 1, with a formal order to pay support, and with the focal father's payment of support in that year. A possible explanation for the positive association of mother's earnings with child support received may be that mothers with higher earnings tend to partner with males who have higher earning capacities and, therefore, a higher ability to make payments. However, there is mixed evidence concerning the relationship of father's earnings with the child support received by mothers, and some of the observed relationships are less intuitive. For example, compared to families with focal fathers who had no formal earnings in year 1, families with focal fathers who had formal earnings of $5,000–$9,999 are estimated to receive less in child support payments. This somewhat unexpected relationship may occur because fathers with no formal earnings are a heterogeneous group in terms of their economic situation; some may have earnings that are not captured in this study's data. Such earnings may come from self-employment, the informal labor market, and out-of-state jobs.

Food stamp benefits are found to be higher for families with more children and higher for mothers with lower earnings. Such benefits are estimated to be lower for families in which focal fathers had annual earnings above $10,000 in year 1 than for families with focal fathers who have no formal earnings in that year. Also, food stamp benefits are estimated to be

Table 3

DIFFERENCE-IN-DIFFERENCE MODELS: EFFECTS OF PATERNAL IMPRISONMENT ON CHILD SUPPORT AND FOOD STAMPS

	ANNUAL CHILD SUPPORT RECEIVED (IN US$)		ANNUAL FOOD STAMP BENEFITS (IN US$)	
	Coefficient	SE	Coefficient	SE
Intercept	1,276**	175	205*	85
Time (reference is year 5 versus year 2)	563**	53	181**	29
Imprisonment group (paternal imprisonment in year 4)	−221**	54	233**	68
Time × imprisonment	−701**	71	208**	80
Mother had any child by another partner (time-varying variables)[a]	1,092**	168	257*	130
No. of mother's children (time-varying variables; reference is one child):				
2	116	117	99**	100
≥ 3	−191	475	1,876**	491
Mother's formal earnings in year 1 (reference is no earnings):				
$1–$4,999	83	80	9	68
$5,000–$9,999	255**	95	−246**	69
$10,000–$19,999	278**	99	−467**	66
≥ $20,000	664**	184	−564**	75
Focal father's formal earnings in year 1 (reference is no earnings):				
$1–$4,999	−414**	102	−22	67
$5,000–$9,999	−285*	118	−76	73
$10,000–$19,999	45	121	−208**	61
≥ $20,000	956**	142	−278**	54
Age of focal father (in child support model) or age of mother (in food stamps model) at focal child's birth (reference is 21–23):				
Under 18	−203*	102	286**	65
19–20	−112	78	32	44
24–27	224+	123	44	73
≥ 28	257+	141	113	98
Age of focal father in relation to mother's age (reference is same age [± 2 years]):				
≥ 10 years younger	−262	199	116	75
5–9 years younger	−370**	130	45	57
2–5 years younger	−213**	81	136**	47
2–5 years older	246	272	18	90
5–9 years older	−47	353	247	221
≥ 10 years older	392	576	−34	241
Parents' races combined (reference is both white):				
Both black	−556**	101	342	74
Both Hispanic	−414**	142	259	186
Mother white, father black	−248	224	197**	76
Mother white, father Hispanic	−216	153	46	109
All other combinations	−376**	136	127	80
Either unknown	−107	98	20	51

Table 3 (*Continued*)

	Annual Child Support Received (in US$)		Annual Food Stamp Benefits (in US$)	
	Coefficient	SE	Coefficient	SE
Milwaukee	−81	102	322**	65
Urban counties	71	79	115**	41
Year of focal child's birth (reference is 1998):				
1999	−39	112	52	51
2000	−122	116	207**	54
2001	−278*	110	234**	59
2002	−191	119	289**	56
Any food stamps from 1 year prior to focal child's birth until 1 year after	−128^{+}	70	855**	45
Any TANF in year 1	−203**	72	124*	57
Focal father's paternity establishment and child support status (reference is paternity established, positive child support owed; no payment made in year 1):				
No paternity established until year 1	−208*	89		
Paternity established but no support orders until year 1	−195^{+}	113		
Paternity established, positive child support owed; payments made in year 1	1,215**	103		

Source.—Wisconsin administrative data.

Note.—N = 5,550 focal child–mother pairs; 11,100 observations. Baseline is the birth of the mother's first nonmarital child (focal child); outcomes are measured against this baseline, and weights are applied. Monetary amounts are adjusted to December 2008 dollars.

[a] Time-varying control variables were measured by the end of year 1 and year 3 (corresponding to the first and second time periods, respectively).

$^{+}$ $p < .10$.

* $p < .05$.

** $p < .01$.

highest among families with mothers who are under the age of 18 at the time of the birth of their first child. Families residing in urban counties (particularly Milwaukee) tend to receive higher food stamp benefits than do families residing in rural counties. Families who have previously received food stamp or TANF cash benefits are found to receive larger amounts of food stamp benefits compared to those who have not received food stamp or TANF cash benefits previously.

Interestingly, even in the analysis that controls for the total number of children, multiple-partner fertility is found to be positively associated with the level of food stamp benefits. To examine the extent to which multiple-partner fertility functions as an intervening variable in the association of father's imprisonment with food stamp benefits, the author conducted sensitivity tests that include control variables for multiple-partner fertility and the number of children (both measured at the end of year 4). Results suggest that multiple-partner fertility and the subse-

Table 4

FIXED EFFECTS MODELS: PATERNAL IMPRISONMENT'S EFFECTS ON CHILD SUPPORT AND FOOD STAMPS

	Difference in Annual Child Support Received, Year 2–Year 5		Difference in Annual Food Stamp Benefits, Year 2–Year 5	
	Coefficient	SE	Coefficient	SE
Intercept	528**	57	237	29
Paternal imprisonment in year 4	−696**	69	253**	80
Mother had children with other partner by end of year 3 versus end of year 1	488**	181	150	159
Mother had more than one child by end of year 1	−77	340	−680	489
No. of children increased by one between year 1 and year 3	517**	136	547**	130
No. of children increased by two or more between year 1 and year 3	375	503	1,399**	407

SOURCE.—Wisconsin administrative data.

NOTE.—$N = 5{,}550$ focal child–mother pairs. Results are adjusted to December 2008 US dollars. Baseline is the birth of the mother's first-born nonmarital child, and outcomes are measured against this baseline. Weights are applied.

** $p < .01$.

quent increase in the number of children may account for up to 53 percent of paternal imprisonment's positive relationship with food stamp benefits.

Sensitivity Tests

Table 4 shows key results from fixed effects models, and the results are consistent with estimates from the DD models; fathers' imprisonment is estimated to reduce the child support received by families and to increase the food stamp benefits they receive. Additional sensitivity tests are conducted using alternative model specifications and samples (see table A1 in the appendix). The alternative models include but are not restricted to DD models that consider only the imprisonment of the focal child's biological father in identifying paternal imprisonment, DD models that control for time-varying measures of formal employment of the mother and the focal father, and DD models that consider formal child support or food stamp benefits in year 6 as the dependent variable. To assess the extent to which base results may be affected by incomplete (continuing) periods of incarceration among men incarcerated in year 4, an alternative analysis estimates models that restrict the treatment group to families that experienced the father's imprisonment in year 4 as well as in year 5. In sum, key results remain consistent across models.

In results from logistic regression analysis, families that experienced paternal imprisonment in year 4 are, in year 5, estimated to be .69 times less likely to receive any child support and .56 times more likely to receive food stamp benefits than they are in year 2 (see table A1, test 6). The tests also estimate effects of fathers' imprisonment on mothers' formal earnings and TANF cash benefits: the estimated effects on both outcomes are statistically nonsignificant (see table A2, tests 13 and 14). These results are robust to alternative model specifications.

Conclusion and Policy Implications

To help researchers and policy makers understand and enhance both the economic well-being of disadvantaged children and the interaction among social systems, this research examines the effects of fathers' imprisonment on child support and welfare outcomes among nonmarital children's families. Although results indicate that paternal imprisonment reduces the child support received by mothers, they also suggest that concurrent increases in mothers' food stamp benefits fill a portion of the resulting gap. An additional analysis suggests that the associations of fathers' imprisonment with economic outcomes continue over a longer time frame than that captured in this study (see table A1, test 5).

The implications of these findings differ with one's perspective on the function of welfare. If one understands welfare as a vital safety net, the results can be interpreted as a limited success story: food stamp benefits work as a safety net when families face an economic crisis due to fathers' imprisonment. This perspective may give rise to concern for those who, because of a father's imprisonment, become impoverished and eligible for food stamp benefits but do not use those benefits (this group may be of concern especially because the associations of fathers' imprisonment with mothers' earnings and TANF cash benefits are estimated to be statistically nonsignificant). Conversely, one whose viewpoint on welfare is framed by concern about welfare dependency and work incentives may see increases in family welfare reliance as a potentially important and negative consequence of paternal imprisonment. A third perspective may find concern in the evidence that a father's imprisonment increases the family's welfare usage because growth in welfare usage imposes a substantial economic burden on taxpayers.

Several limitations of the data used in this study are noteworthy. First, the data provide limited information about the quality of fathers' involvement with their children beyond formal child support payments. Also, approximately 23 percent of focal fathers are estimated to be missing from the data because their paternity of focal children is not formally established. If the effects of these fathers' imprisonment on economic outcomes differ from those of fathers reported in the data, estimates will be

biased. The data are likely to miss nonmarital births that shortly preceded either the parents' marriage (unless the couple later divorced and the mother enrolled the child's case in the child support enforcement system) or long-lasting cohabitation without formal establishment of paternity in KIDS.[5] These missing cases will downwardly bias the estimates of the influence of fathers' imprisonment on food stamp benefits if fathers in more stable relationships with mothers are more likely to contribute to their children prior to imprisonment. Missing information about some types of fertility affects the selection of the study sample (as explained above) and also limits the study's ability to identify any subsequent partners with whom the mothers have children. This limitation is relevant because the current study considers the imprisonment of these subsequent partners (whether or not they are married to the mother). However, the data constructed for this analysis are unique in providing the opportunity to simultaneously consider the imprisonment of fathers of all children born to the sampled mothers. The analysis also is limited to examining the correlates of incarceration in Wisconsin state prisons. The data do not capture incarceration in such other correctional facilities as local jails or federal penitentiaries. To the extent that the comparison group includes families with fathers incarcerated in other correctional systems, but not in a Wisconsin state prison, missing incarceration information will tend to downwardly bias the absolute sizes of the estimated effects. Moreover, because the effects of incarceration may differ across jurisdictions, caution should be taken in the generalization of the results.

Finally, the data do not include reliable information on fathers' imprisonment histories prior to the focal child's birth; therefore, the analysis does not control for this factor in the model of imprisonment effects. This limitation should be alleviated to some extent by the construction of the sample, which excludes families that experienced fathers' imprisonment in the first 3 years following the focal child's birth. However, this sample restriction limits the generalizability of the results; because this process disproportionately excludes cases in which fathers are unlikely to provide support to their children, a study that includes a broader group of nonmarital children might produce smaller estimates of the relationships between imprisonment and economic outcomes (for a relevant analysis, see table A2, test 10).

Some additional limitations of the analysis merit discussion and may prompt innovation in future research. First, the study's empirical food stamp model does not simultaneously consider mothers' work and participation in such other public programs as Medicaid, the Earned Income Tax Credit, and housing and child subsidies. These factors conjointly shape the options available to mothers and simultaneously affect their re-

5. It is also possible that some of the missing fathers are not represented in the data because the state child support enforcement system has difficulty locating them. Such fathers may include those who are incarcerated.

source decisions. Second, the dissimilar effects of paternal imprisonment for different groups (e.g., mothers from different racial groups or those with different levels of human capital) merit further research. Another limitation is that the study does not differentiate the effects of the imprisonment of focal children's biological fathers from the effects of the imprisonment of their half-siblings' fathers. In addition, although the current study focuses on whether paternal imprisonment occurred in a given period of time, further research could improve understanding of paternal imprisonment by investigating the effects of the length of paternal imprisonment on economic outcomes. Simultaneous consideration of mothers' imprisonment would also provide a nuanced understanding of the issue.

Notwithstanding these limitations, the study makes several important contributions to the literature on child support, welfare, and parental incarceration. By considering the imprisonment of the fathers of focal children's half-siblings, the study makes conceptual and empirical contributions to the literature on social policy that targets populations in which multiple-partner fertility is prevalent. Comparison of the base and sensitivity results suggests that, in studies of paternal imprisonment, considering other partners of the mothers would likely affect the magnitude of estimated imprisonment effects (although, as in this study, the results may be similar in terms of the direction and statistical significance of key coefficients). For example, the magnitudes of imprisonment effects are likely underestimated in empirical studies in which children who experience the imprisonment of their social fathers (not their biological fathers) are categorized as having no experience of paternal imprisonment.

The results of this study have implications for the intersection of multiple public policies. Findings suggest that widespread imprisonment may undermine state governments' efforts to collect child support and may reduce states' abilities to meet performance standards. High rates of imprisonment may also undermine the success of recent welfare policy reforms designed to reduce welfare expenditures and promote parental responsibility among low-income fathers. The empirical results of the current study challenge the traditional cost-benefit analysis of incarceration, which ignores the costs of incarceration on the families left behind as well as on other public systems. By identifying empirical evidence of the extensive collateral costs of imprisonment, this study provides further support for the dominant claim that the current US incarceration rate is above the optimal level (Raphael and Stoll 2009).

In addition, the study suggests that widespread paternal imprisonment may, in the context of declining public support, exacerbate the consequences of welfare reform for children and should therefore be considered in the design, evaluation, and planning of social policies. Researchers and advocates increasingly pay attention to the connection between incarceration and child support. Efforts are underway to develop policy options to alleviate the negative consequences of incarceration for both

children and public systems, including child support systems (Cancian, Noyes, et al. 2009; Comfort et al. 2011). Such efforts should be continued in order to enhance the economic well-being of disadvantaged families and children.

Appendix

Table A1

THE EFFECTS OF FATHERS' IMPRISONMENT ON ECONOMIC OUTCOMES: ALTERNATIVE SAMPLES AND MODELS

		EFFECTS OF IMPRISONMENT ON:			
		Child Support		Food Stamps	
	N	Coefficient	SE	Coefficient	SE
Results using base specifications[a]	5,500	−701**	71	208**	80
Sensitivity test results for child support and food stamp models:					
1. Considered only focal father in identifying paternal imprisonment	5,500	−683**	72	169*	84
2. Considered only focal father in identifying paternal imprisonment and calculating child support payments	5,500	−659**	68	. . .	
3. Included child support order establishment and payments from focal father (measured year 1) as control variables in food stamp model	5,500	. . .		208**	80
4. Controlled for second father's formal earnings in year 1 (if any second father by time considered)	5,500	−677**	70	223**	80
5. Examined economic outcomes in year 6 as dependent variable	5,500	−553**	81	303**	90
6. Employed logistic analysis of any receipt of child support or food stamps in year 5 (vs. year 2)	5,500	−.69**	.18	.56*	.22
7. Controlled for time-varying measures of formal earnings of mother and focal father	5,500	−647**	72	170*	80
8. Excluded cases in which imprisonment was for nonpayment of child support	5,504	−702**	71	200*	80
9. Included cases in which paternity date was unknown or paternity established more than 5 years after focal child's birth	5,784	−685**	68	228**	68
10. Included cases previously excluded because any of mother's partners were imprisoned when focal child was age 0–3	8,624	−499**	54	101*	47

Table A1 (*Continued*)

		Effects of Imprisonment on:			
		Child Support		Food Stamps	
	N	Coefficient	SE	Coefficient	SE
11. Restricted treated group to families that experienced paternal imprisonment in years 4 and 5	5,459	−762	73	225	86
12. Used alternative treated group (test 11); restricted control group to families that experienced fathers' imprisonment in neither year 4 nor year 5	4,907	−781	74	234	86
Imprisonment effects on other economic outcomes:					
13. Considered TANF cash benefits as dependent variable	5,500	6	108		
14. Considered formal earnings as dependent variable	5,500	55	421		

Source.—Wisconsin administrative data.

Note.—N = 5,550 focal child mother pairs. TANF = Temporary Assistance for Needy Families program. Baseline is the birth of the mother's first-born nonmarital child, and outcomes are measured against this baseline. Weights are applied.

[a] Base specifications are as follows. When identifying paternal imprisonment, a dummy variable is used to indicate the imprisonment of the focal child's biological father or the father (or fathers) of the focal child's half-sibling (or half-siblings). The key economic outcome variables are child support and food stamp benefits in dollars in year 5 (vs. year 2). Control variables include, but are not restricted to, time-varying measures of multiple-partner fertility and number of children, and earnings of mother and focal father in year 1. Base models do not control for the earnings of subsequent partners of the mother.

* $p < .05$.

** $p < .01$.

Table A2

ANNUAL ECONOMIC OUTCOMES OF MOTHERS FOLLOWING THE BIRTH OF FIRST CHILDREN

	Mean ($)	Median ($)	Minimum ($)	Maximum ($)	% of Positive
Child support payments received by mothers from all partners:					
Year 1	500	0	0	12,707	34
Year 2	1,404	276	0	122,803	57
Year 3	1,718	815	0	96,718	65
Year 4	1,916	1,084	0	81,514	69
Year 5	2,028	1,281	0	27,539	71
Year 6	2,129	1,341	0	27,135	71
Food stamps received by mothers:					
Year 1	824	0	0	17,622	44
Year 2	871	0	0	14,846	48
Year 3	1,029	55	0	13,046	51
Year 4	1,151	114	0	20,408	53
Year 5	1,217	115	0	20,966	53
Year 6	1,286	90	0	14,012	52
Mothers' formal earnings:					
Year 1	7,613	4,720	0	72,904	83
Year 2	10,148	7,741	0	72,431	85
Year 3	11,015	8,299	0	94,465	84
Year 4	11,548	8,965	0	108,736	83
Year 5	11,801	9,080	0	84,933	81
Year 6	12,147	9,399	0	108,993	79
TANF cash benefits received by mothers:					
Year 1	715	0	0	10,333	24
Year 2	562	0	0	10,258	15
Year 3	602	0	0	9,671	16
Year 4	476	0	0	10,179	14
Year 5	383	0	0	9,460	11
Year 6	301	0	0	9,604	10

SOURCE.—Wisconsin administrative data.

NOTE.—$N = 5,550$ focal child–mother pairs. Weights are applied. All monetary amounts are adjusted to December 2008 dollars.

Note

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Formative Sexual Communications, Sexual Agency and Coercion, and Youth Sexual Health

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This article argues that formative sexual communications, and sexual attitudes and behaviors, are important foci in the exploration of the sexual health of young people. The study examines links among sexual messages received from parents and friends, the sexual attitudes of young men and women, and the sexual experiences of those youth. Analyses of data collected from 332 undergraduates suggest that sexual socialization messages are linked with such outcomes as sexual agency and sexual coercion. Additionally, young women and men appear to receive different types of messages, which affect their attitudes and behaviors differently. This study concludes that social work can use empirical research to support an agenda committed to engendering sexual health among youth.

Sexuality is a critical developmental issue, particularly in adolescence and emerging adulthood. Current research on sexual socialization suggests that early messages received about sexuality may have salient effects on the sexual behaviors of adolescents and emerging adults. These effects may in turn shape experiences and attitudes for a lifetime. Yet youth sexual health in the United States is also a controversial subject that is complicated by many factors, including a cultural ambivalence toward sexuality (Elliott 2010*b*).

Examining this issue is also challenging because researchers differ in their conceptualization of youth sexual health. Some argue that early ef-

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forts to prevent teen pregnancy served to regulate female sexuality (Odem 1995). Current research efforts tend to conceptualize adolescent sexual health as exclusive; that is, they see it as a concept that covers freedom from pregnancy, sexually transmitted diseases, and violence (e.g., Lanctôt and Smith 2001). Those works focus on the prevention of these specific, medicalized, and negative outcomes, often neglecting issues of general sexual communication, efficacy, and desired experiences (Hartley and Drew 2001) or neglecting to treat emergent sexuality as developmentally normative in adolescence. A minority choose to describe "adolescent sexual health" as inclusive of pleasure, love, and intimacy (Haffner 1998, 458). Others associate it with gender equity and complementarity (Tolman, Striepe, and Harmon 2003; Tolman and McClelland 2011). Some adopt a holistic approach to youth sexuality and treat it as a social work issue (e.g., Clark 2001*a*) or argue for a broader focus on overall adolescent health (Clark 2001*b*). These attempts are a start. Adolescent risk and illness are compelling social justice issues deserving of attention, but a gap remains between the view presented by the majority of research studies and a more inclusive and contextualized approach to sexuality research. The current study attempts to address this gap by considering youth sexuality beyond dichotomous variables and by presenting research on youth communications and experiences, including messages that young people receive about sexuality and related outcomes. Specifically, it considers how sexual communications are linked with sexual agency and negotiation as well as with negative sexual experiences. It also considers gender differences in youth experiences and implications for social work.

Background

Adolescence and emerging adulthood are times of exploration and risk taking. During this time, critical development occurs in the areas of gender and sexuality (Arnett 2000). As youth work to negotiate emerging sexual desires and identities, they are commonly inundated with communication about sexuality. These messages come from a variety of socialization sources, including parents (Darling and Hicks 1982; DiIorio, Kelley, and Hockenberry-Eaton 1999; Downie and Coates 1999), friends (Pistella and Bonati 1998; Lefkowitz, Boone, and Shearer 2004; Busse et al. 2010), schools (Dailard 2002), and even the media (Ward 1995, 2003; Krassas, Blauwkamp, and Wesselink 2003; Aubrey 2004). The nature and effect of such messages are likely to vary based on specific message content (e.g., endorsing abstinence or sex).

Although some research explores correlates of the presence or amount of sexual communication received (e.g., Clawson and Reese-Weber 2003; Beckett et al. 2010), fewer studies explore those of the specific content communicated. Consequently, there is little research on the content or

effect of sexual messages received by young people. Existing research also tends to dichotomize youth behavior, dividing young people into virgins and nonvirgins. It commonly considers the age at which first intercourse occurs rather than taking a more contextual view of early sexual experiences (Whitaker, Miller, and Clark 2000; Hertzog 2008). Finally, studies that do examine socialization sources focus mostly on parents but pay less attention to other socialization agents (e.g., Darling and Hicks 1982; DiIorio et al. 1999; Downie and Coates 1999; O'Sullivan, Meyer-Bahlburg, and Watkins 2001; Hutchinson 2002; Kim and Ward 2007; Crohn 2010).

This study takes a broader view of sexuality, acknowledging that sexual learning comes from a variety of communication sources and that sexual behavior encompasses more than the initiation of sexual intercourse. It also acknowledges that youth sexual health, though inclusive of issues like prevention of teen pregnancy, sexually transmitted diseases, HIV, and sexual assault, is more than the sum of these issues. Accordingly, the purpose of this study is to explore possible consequences of exposure to specific discourses received from several sources for sexual attitudes and experiences. It examines three specific discourses: the sexual double-standard discourse, the sexual abstinence discourse, and the positive-sexuality discourse. The sexual double-standard discourse suggests different sexual expectations for women. The sexual abstinence discourse generally advocates abstaining from sex until marriage. The positive-sexuality discourse views sexuality as a natural part of life.

The study investigates messages that youth receive from parents and friends because these contacts are two influential sources of information in the lives of adolescents and emerging adults (Lefkowitz and Espinosa-Hernandez 2007). The literature frequently notes that parents communicate messages about abstinence, safety, and caution to their children (Darling and Hicks 1982; DiIorio et al. 1999; Downie and Coates 1999; Hutchinson 2002). However, these are not the only messages conveyed. Research also indicates that young adults value highly the sexual communication with their friends and are more likely to talk with their friends than with others about sex and personal sexual experiences (Pistella and Bonati 1998; Lefkowitz et al. 2004). Expanding on traditional approaches, this study attempts to capture the breadth of such communication by examining the diverse messages communicated by two sets of socialization agents and by testing contributions of the messages to several sexual health behaviors.

Three Common Sexual Discourses

One sexual discourse that young people commonly encounter during their formative years is the gender-specific sexual double standard, in which men are encouraged to show sexual desire and pursue sex outside

of a relationship, but women are not (Tolman 2002). Indeed, findings indicate that adolescent boys and girls are socialized differently, receiving separate, often conflicting messages about sexuality. Heterosexual scripts often emphasize women's need to avoid being considered a "slut" (Tolman, Spencer, et al. 2003, 165; Kalmuss et al. 2003). They encourage women to be passive, to please their boyfriends, and not to show signs of desire (Tolman 2002). In contrast, heterosexual scripts encourage young men to pursue sex, devalue emotion, and objectify women. Because nearly all of the existing sexual socialization research focuses on general communications about sexuality (e.g., messages to wait for marriage or use condoms), it overlooks this gendered aspect of sexual communications. However, analyses indicate that girls and boys frequently receive different proportions of other sexual communications, and these differences create patterns that suggest a sexual double standard. For example, research indicates that parents communicate negative messages about sex to young women and that young women are more likely than young men to receive fear-based messages about things like rape and the importance of protecting themselves (Downie and Coates 1999). In contrast, the literature suggests that young men are more likely than young women to receive positive sexual messages (Darling and Hicks 1982). This discrepancy is likely to reinforce traditional gender roles and increase power differentials between young women and men, potentially contributing to negative outcomes such as unwanted sexual experiences, sexual coercion, and a lack of condom efficacy, particularly among women (Crawford and Popp 2003). Building on this premise, the current study explores the extent to which youth receive explicitly gendered sexual messages and considers the effect of this content.

Abstinence is the central theme of a second cultural discourse to which young people are likely exposed. The sexual abstinence discourse emphasizes waiting until marriage to have sexual intercourse and often omits critical health information. The discourse is prominent in religious settings but also exists as a broad cultural theme in the United States. It is particularly prevalent in danger-based messages, which circulate in a context marked by a hypersexualized media as well as by parental fear for their children's health and safety (Ward 2003; Elliott 2010*b*). In the United States, three current federal programs are devoted exclusively to abstinence-only education in schools (Dailard 2002). The curricula portray sexual abstinence as the only acceptable response to peer pressure to have sexual intercourse before marriage. The provisions of the funding forbid these programs from discussing contraception except to emphasize its failure (Dailard 2002). Abstinence messages may also come from parents and friends, though recent findings indicate that abstinence messages are much more likely to come from parents (Lefkowitz

et al. 2004; Epstein and Ward 2008). These messages encourage avoidance of sexual situations rather than engagement with them. They may diminish the effectiveness of communication about sexuality and increase unwanted outcomes, including negative views about condoms (Lefkowitz and Espinosa-Hernandez 2007).

Messages about abstaining from sexual intercourse may not appear explicitly gendered, but there is often a gender differential in the messages conveyed. Girls and young women are more likely to receive abstinence- or fear-based messages than are boys or young men. Often such messages come from their fathers. Boys or young men are more likely to receive positive messages, messages about contraception, or no message (Darling and Hicks 1982; DiIorio et al. 1999; Downie and Coates 1999; O'Sullivan et al. 2001; Averett, Benson, and Vaillancourt 2008). Often embedded within both the double-standard and the abstinence discourses is the message that a woman should be a "sexual gatekeeper" (Schleicher and Gilbert 2005, 9). This difference in the ways messages about sex are delivered to boys and girls is an example of the double standard outlined in the literature. Thus, sexual abstinence messages may reinforce unequal power dynamics between women and men.

A third, less common but emergent discourse conveys the notion that sex is natural and that it can be positive and egalitarian. The study refers to this as the positive-sexuality discourse. The World Health Organization defines sexual health as "a state of physical, emotional, mental and social well-being in relation to sexuality"; it asserts that sexual health "requires a positive and respectful approach to sexuality and sexual relationships, as well as the possibility of having pleasurable and safe sexual experiences, free of coercion, discrimination and violence" (World Health Organization 2006, 5). There seems to be tacit agreement that sex can be a positive and healthy expression of love and affection, and some researchers and policy makers advocate for a more sex-positive tone in sexuality education (e.g., Dailey 1997; Fine and McClelland 2006; Ott et al. 2006; Tolman and McClelland 2011). Yet, there is still relatively little research on positive sexuality, particularly as it relates to youth. One exception is a study that examines communication received by boys about sex (Epstein and Ward 2008). It finds that boys are more likely to receive positive-sexuality messages from their friends and the media than from other sources, but they also are found to receive some messages from their parents that are positive in tone. Indeed, parents likely send the first, positive sexual-socialization messages that young people receive (Lefkowitz and Stoppa 2006). These authors hope that positive-sexuality messages increase communication among young people and diminish unwanted experiences. More research is needed to examine these discourses and their implications for sexual attitudes and behaviors.

Contributions of Discourses to Multiple Components of Sexual Health

Sexual discourses, whether positive or negative, prevalent or minimal, are likely to affect many aspects of early sexual attitudes and behaviors. These contributions are likely to extend to ongoing sexual development and identity work throughout young people's lives. Existing tests of the consequences of early socialization communications typically use a dichotomous measure of virginity, pregnancy, or disease status to represent emergent sexuality (Whitaker et al. 2000; Hertzog 2008). In actuality, however, early communications are likely to affect a range of sexual attitudes, experiences, and behaviors. In part, sexual decision making can be challenging because it often comes down to a moment in which one must balance communicating one's needs, advocating for oneself, and refusing unwanted experiences. How do early sexual discourses affect these critical skills in adolescents and emerging adults? To address this question, the current study explores links among socialization discourses and several measures of constructs that are likely to play a pivotal role in sexual health outcomes: sexual self-efficacy, comfort in sexual communication, inauthentic communication, endorsement of rape myths, and experiences of sexual coercion. For the purposes of this study, dimensions of sexual attitudes and experience are organized into two categories: measures of sexual agency (self-efficacy, sexual communication comfort, inauthentic communication) and measures relating to unwanted sexual experiences (rape myths endorsement, victimization [being sexually coerced], and perpetration [being sexually coercive]).

Sexual agency.—The first examined aspects of sexual-health behaviors are sexual self-efficacy and sexual assertiveness, which are critical components of sexual communication. Self-efficacy, which is defined as one's belief in his or her capacity to execute a given skill, determines how much effort an individual will invest in a given task (Bandura 1986). Research increasingly recognizes that self-efficacy is an important predictor of health behavior and behavior change. Findings indicate that having a general sense of self-efficacy predicts perceived ability to decline invitations to sex (Zimmerman et al. 1995). Among adolescent women, self-efficacy in condom use is found to be a powerful predictor of increases in condom use and of decreases in sexual risk behavior (Sieving et al. 1997; Troth and Peterson 2000; Halpern-Felsher et al. 2004); conversely, youth who exhibit lower self-efficacy in condom use (and more negative attitudes about condoms) are found to engage in riskier sexual behaviors and to report coercive sexual experiences with higher frequency (St. Lawrence et al. 1994). Assertive sexual communication also is found to be an important behavioral factor in the reduction of risky sexual behavior and the promotion of healthy sexual decisions, including condom use (Sieving et al. 1997; Taylor-Seehafer and Rew 2000; Troth and Peterson 2000; Hulton 2001). In addition, young people, particularly young women, may learn that it is more important to be polite than hon-

est in their communications (Tolman and Porche 2000), and such an understanding may open the door for unwanted experiences.

Although little research examines the specific effects of sexual socialization discourses on sexual agency, a few studies link parent-teen communication about sexual risk with increases in both condom use self-efficacy and partner communication among college-age youth (Hutchinson and Cooney 1998; Troth and Peterson 2000). Studies suggest that gendered discourses, particularly the double-standard discourse, may contribute to power discrepancies between women and men. Specifically, such discourses may contribute to increases in female passivity, declines in feelings of sexual agency, and declines in communication in sexual situations (Hynie and Lydon 1995; Gavey and McPhillips 1999; Crawford and Popp 2003; Averett et al. 2008). Several studies also indicate that, for women, buying into traditional gender ideologies is linked with decreases in sexual agency, sexual assertiveness, condom use self-efficacy, and sexual-risk knowledge (Tolman 1999; Impett, Schooler, and Tolman 2006; Curtin et al. 2011).

Rape myths and sexual coercion.—The second set of examined aspects of sexual behaviors are endorsement of rape myths and experiences with sexual coercion. Rape myths, defined as beliefs about what may cause or contribute to rape, tend to support the ideas that perpetrators are not entirely responsible for their actions and that rape victims are at least partially to blame (Sawyer, Thompson, and Chicorelli 2002). Rape myths also tend to be linked with traditional views about gender roles (Johnson, Kuck, and Schander 1997; Ben-David and Schneider 2005). Little is known about how sexual socialization discourses affect endorsement or acceptance of rape myths, but a few studies find that holding double-standard ideologies is correlated with rape perceptions. Specifically, women who initiate dates (and thereby defy the sexual double standard) are perceived by undergraduates to be more likely than other women to engage in sex, and the same respondents rate the rape of a woman who initiates a date as more justified than the rape of other women (Muehlenhard 1988). Initiating physical contact with a man is also found to increase the likelihood that a woman will be perceived as responsible for her rape (Muehlenhard and McNaughton 1988).

Abstinence messages may reinforce these attitudes, because they tend not to address issues of sexual negotiation and they express gendered ideas about what behavior can be characterized as appropriate. Conversely, positive-sexuality messages are more likely to be gender-egalitarian by nature and to advocate that sexuality is healthy for both women and men (Jackson and Weatherall 2010). As such, positive-sexuality messages may be less consistent with endorsement of gendered rape myths than are abstinence messages.

Coercion and negative sexual experiences are a regular part of heterosexual encounters in adolescence and particularly common among

young women (Houts 2005; Muehlenhard and Peterson 2005). Although 93 percent of teenage women report that their first experience of sexual intercourse was voluntary, in that they were not forced, 25 percent of these women report that this experience was unwanted (Moore, Driscoll, and Lindberg 1998). These numbers suggest that young women may have difficulties communicating their desires and boundaries. They also suggest that women find it difficult to refuse unwanted sexual advances.

Research suggests that gender differences emerge as adolescents and emerging adults gain sexual experience; young men report greater feelings of psychological control, and young women report less (Whitaker and Miller 2000). The strategies endorsed by adolescent boys in pursuit of sex are more coercive than those endorsed by girls. Such strategies include pressuring, raping, lying to, and physically threatening partners, as well as getting them drunk. Compared with their male counterparts, adolescent girls endorse more passive strategies and are more likely to allow unwanted sex to occur (Eyre, Read, and Millstein 1997).

Gender differentials in power, socialization, and messages received may contribute to sexual coercion. Deborah Tolman, Renée Spencer, and colleagues (2003) argue that early gendered interactions between girls and boys are likely to sow "the seeds of violence" in subsequent interpersonal relationships. If reinforced early, traditional gender dynamics, which often include power differences, may be replicated in later sexual interactions; that is, young men may exert more power than young women in heterosexual interactions. These features are particularly salient in a society that communicates gender-specific understandings of sex through such messages as the double-standard discourse. For example, the beliefs that men always want to have sex and that their libido is unstoppable may contribute to unwanted (though not always coercive) sexual interactions (Walker 1997).

Sexual abstinence messages may also contribute to unwanted experiences. Abstinence messages advocate for the postponement of sexual intercourse in order to avoid unwanted outcomes (whether unwanted by the adolescents themselves or by authority figures conveying this message). However, some evidence suggests that these same abstinence messages may increase risk because they are geared primarily toward young women (Darling and Hicks 1982; DiIorio et al. 1999; Downie and Coates 1999) and generally offer little discussion of sexual negotiation strategies (Luker 2006). Positive messages about sexuality may increase the likelihood of partner openness and communication as well as decrease the likelihood of unwanted sexual experiences.

It bears mentioning that unwanted (and coercive) sexual experiences may happen despite all precautions; this study does not imply that those who experience sexual violence hold any responsibility for the actions of sexual perpetrators nor that sexual coercion occurs only be-

tween men and women. However, research suggests that lack of preparation or difficulty communicating may increase one's risk in some situations; open communication may sometimes be protective (Tolman 1999; Impett et al. 2006). Although there are different types of nonvolitional sex, this study addresses unwanted experience and nonviolent coercion, rather than rape, incest, or other physical abuse. It also focuses on heterosexual interactions.

Motivating Hypotheses

Research indicates that most American men and women will engage in sexual intercourse by age 19 (Abma, Martinez, and Copen 2010) and that the emergent adulthood years, ages 18–26, are pivotal in the development of sexual relationships (Arnett 2000). This study focuses on college-age young people (aged 17–22) who are nearing the end of their adolescence and entering emerging adulthood. They likely have received sexual socialization messages throughout their lives and may be or become sexually active during this period. Surveying a college population on sexual messages and outcomes may provide information about the effects of multiple discourses on early sexual experiences and decisions. The authors hypothesize that young people who receive stronger double-standard or sexual abstinence messages are less prepared to safely navigate sexual situations. They also are hypothesized to be more likely to endorse myths about sexuality and rape and more likely to find themselves in coercive situations. Conversely, the authors hypothesize that young people who receive stronger positive-sexuality messages are more likely to view sex positively, feel more able to negotiate sexual situations, and have fewer unwanted experiences. In addition, evidence that young men and women are affected differently by these messages leads the authors to hypothesize that double-standard and abstinence messages reinforce male assertiveness and female passivity. Finally, the study explores how sexual socialization messages received from parents and friends may operate when placed in a model together and what the potential effects may be upon sexual agency and sexual coercion variables.

The authors propose the following hypotheses:

1. Sexual double-standard messages
   a. Young women will receive more sexual double-standard messages than will young men.
   b. Higher levels of exposure to sexual double-standard messages will be linked with lower levels of sexual agency in women and with higher levels of agency in men.
   c. Higher levels of exposure to sexual double-standard messages will be linked with higher endorsement of rape myths in both genders

and with higher reports of coercive experiences (specifically, higher reports of victimization in women and higher reports of perpetration in men).

2. Sexual abstinence messages
   a. Young women will receive more sexual abstinence messages than will young men.
   b. Higher levels of exposure to abstinence messages will be correlated with lower levels of sexual agency in both women and men.
   c. Higher levels of exposure to abstinence messages will be correlated with higher rape myths endorsement in both genders and with higher report of coercive experiences (victimization in women and perpetration in men).
3. Positive-sexuality messages
   a. Young men will receive more positive-sexuality messages than young women.
   b. Higher levels of exposure to positive-sexuality messages will be linked with higher levels of sexual agency in both women and men.
   c. Higher levels of exposure to positive-sexuality messages will be linked with lower endorsement of rape myths in both genders and with lower report of coercive experiences in both men and women.

Method

Participants and Procedure

Data for this study come from a survey of 332 undergraduates (57 percent female) who were aged 17–22 (mean age is 19 years) and attending a large midwestern university in 2005. The majority of participants (73.5 percent) identified as white or Caucasian, though 15.4 percent identified as Asian or Pacific Islander, 4.2 percent as Latina or Latino, and 3.9 percent as black or African American. Ninety-eight percent identified as exclusively or predominantly heterosexual. Additional information about participants is provided in table 1.

Participants completed a confidential, hour-long survey in winter 2005 in partial fulfillment of a psychology course requirement. They completed the survey on campus, in a private setting, in groups no larger than 20. They sat far apart and were told that they could skip any question if they chose. All participants signed written consent forms indicating understanding of these instructions. This study was approved by the university's institutional review board.

Measures

Discourse measures.—Using a four-point scale on which possible responses range from "none" (assigned a value of 0) to "a lot" (coded as 3), partici-

Table 1

DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS

	CHARACTERISTIC	
	n	%
Gender:		
Female	188	57
Male	144	43
Age (years):		
17	8	2.4
18	129	38.9
19	153	46.1
20	30	9.0
21	11	3.3
22	1	.3
Ethnicity:		
White or Caucasian	244	73.5
Asian or Pacific Islander	51	15.4
Latina or Latino	14	4.2
Black or African American	13	3.9
Did not respond	4	1.2

NOTE.—$N = 332$.

pants characterize the extent to which their parents and friends communicated each of 60 sexual values. The prompt states, "For each message, please indicate how strongly this notion was communicated to you by each of these sources." Six subscales were developed through factor analysis, and three of those are analyzed here: a sexual double-standard subscale, a sexual abstinence subscale, and a positive-sexuality subscale.

The 14-item sexual double-standard subscale focuses on messages reflecting the idea that men want sex but women do not (e.g., "Men want sex, women want relationships"; message from parent, $\alpha = .92$; message from friend, $\alpha = .89$). The 11-item sexual abstinence subscale focuses on messages that endorse waiting until marriage to have sex (e.g., "Sex belongs only in married relationships"; parent, $\alpha = .90$; friend, $\alpha = .84$). The eight-item positive-sexuality subscale reflects the discourse that sex is positive, natural, and egalitarian (e.g., "Being sexual is a natural part of being human"; parent, $\alpha = .83$; friend, $\alpha = .79$). See appendix A for the complete list of items in the three discourse subscales.

Measures of sexual agency.—The Sexual Self-Efficacy Scale (Rosenthal, Moore, and Flynn 1991) assesses perceived confidence in the ability to accomplish specific contraception-related tasks. Twenty items make up three subscales. This study uses only the five-item condom-use self-efficacy scale ($\alpha = .80$). The survey asks participants to "indicate whether or not you think you *can do* each of the following activities, regardless of whether or not you are sexually active." A five-point Likert scale is used, and responses range from "very uncertain" to "absolutely certain." Sample items include "Discuss using condoms and/or other contraceptives with a potential part-

ner" and "Be able to buy condoms/contraceptives." A mean score is computed such that higher scores indicate greater sexual self-efficacy.

Sexual communication is measured by two established scales. Comfort in sexual communication is assessed with the 25-item Hurlbert Index of Sexual Assertiveness (Hurlbert 1991) in order to determine the extent of participants' agency in communicating in sexual situations ($\alpha = .90$). Participants are asked to indicate how accurately each statement describes them. Items include "I communicate my sexual desires to my partner" and "I find myself doing sexual things I do not like." Responses are captured by a five-point Likert scale, which ranges from 0 ("never") to 4 ("all of the time"). A "not applicable" response option is also provided for each item to accommodate those who lack dating or sexual experience. The necessary items are reverse-scored, and a mean score is created; higher scores reflect greater comfort with sexual communication. The second aspect of sexual communication, inauthentic voice, is measured with the Inauthentic Voice in Relationships subscale of the Femininity Ideology Scale ($\alpha = .81$; Tolman and Porche 2000). This scale assesses the reported extent to which individuals feel that politeness is more important than honesty in conversation with others. Although this scale is normed on women, it is used here with both women and men. Participants indicate the extent of their agreement with each of 10 items (e.g., "I express my opinions only if I can think of a nice way of doing it") on a six-point Likert-type scale. Possible responses range from "strongly disagree" (assigned a value of 1) to "strongly agree" (given a value of 6). Several items are recoded, and mean scores are computed so that higher scores indicate greater preference for politeness over honesty. Such a preference is characterized here as inauthenticity or as inauthentic voice.

Measures relating to unwanted sexual experiences.—The Burt Rape Myths Acceptance Scale ($\alpha = .88$; Burt 1980) is widely used to assess acceptance or endorsement of rape myths. Acceptance or endorsement is often associated with an increased acceptance of dating violence and the belief that victims are to blame for their predicament (Sawyer et al. 2002). Research suggests that one's definition of date rape is likely to narrow as acceptance of rape myths increases (Burt 1980). Responses to this 11-item scale are made on a seven-point scale that ranges from 1 ("strongly disagree") to 7 ("strongly agree"). Items include "A woman who goes to the home or apartment of a man on their first date implies that she is willing to have sex" and "Any healthy woman can successfully resist a rapist if she really wants to." The necessary items are reverse-scored, and a mean score is created to reflect overall endorsement of traditional rape myths; higher scores indicate greater endorsement.

This study also utilizes a modified version of the Sexual Experiences Survey scale (Koss and Oros 1982) to examine desirability of sexual experiences ($\alpha = .80$). One item asks whether the respondent ever had sexual contact with a partner when both wanted to, and another item asks

whether another person ever misinterpreted the level of intimacy that the respondent desired. Four items measure whether people experienced being sexually coerced (hereafter, victimization experience). For example, respondents are asked, "Have you ever had a sexual experience with someone even though you said no at first?" Five items also ask whether the respondent sexually coerced others (hereafter, perpetration experience). For example, an item queries, "Have you ever had a sexual experience with someone even though they said no at first?" Both the victimization and perpetration measures are scored on a modified scale that captures participants' responses as "no" (assigned a value of 0), "yes, kissing and petting" (coded as 1), or "yes, sexual intercourse" (coded as 2). If participants checked off more than one box, their score is summed. This produces two variables; the victimization variable represents the experience of being coerced into a sexual encounter (maximum possible score is 12), and the perpetration variable represents the experience of being coercive (maximum possible score is 15).

Results

Analyses of Amount of Discourses Received and Levels of Sexual Health Outcomes

Table 2 provides descriptors of all three sexual discourses. Participants report that, from all sources, they receive more positive-sexuality messages than other messages. In addition to results in table 2, which compare amounts of messages received by each gender, the author also runs pairwise *t*-tests to compare receipt of each message by source. Participants receive statistically significantly higher scores on the measure of sexual double-standard messages from friends than on the corresponding measure concerning parents ($t\,[331] = -23.72$, $p < .001$), statistically significantly higher scores on the measure of sexual abstinence messages from parents than on the corresponding measure concerning friends ($t\,[330] = 12.70$, $p < .001$), and statistically significantly higher scores on the measure of positive-sexuality messages from friends than on the corresponding measure involving parents ($t\,[331] = -23.87$, $p < .001$). All scores are relatively high for messages from both parents and friends.

As the authors predict in hypothesis 1a, young women are estimated to receive statistically significantly more sexual double-standard messages from parents (1.04) than young men do (.58). The estimated quantity of sexual double-standard messages that young women receive from friends (1.69) is roughly equivalent to that received by men (1.59). The results also suggest that, as hypothesized (hypothesis 2a), young women are estimated to receive more sexual abstinence messages from both parents (women: 1.1; men: .91) and friends (women: .61; men: .52), although both young women and men are estimated to receive relatively few abstinence messages from friends. Contrary to hypothesis 3a, young women

Table 2

SEXUAL DISCOURSES COMMUNICATED DURING ADOLESCENCE

Discourse	α	All[a]	Female[b]	Male[c]	Sex Difference (F)
Sexual double standard (14 items):					
Parents	.92	.84 (.70)	1.04 (.73)	.58 (.57)	16.494***
Friends	.89	1.6 (.62)	1.69 (.60)	1.59 (.64)	.687
Sexual abstinence (11 items):					
Parents	.90	1.02 (.78)	1.1 (.81)	.91 (.72)	5.131*
Friends	.84	.57 (.50)	.61 (.53)	.52 (.46)	2.791^{+}
Positive sexuality (8 items):					
Parents	.83	1.10 (.73)	1.07 (.72)	1.14 (.75)	.254
Friends	.79	1.98 (.65)	1.98 (.64)	1.97 (.67)	.015

NOTE.—F = omnibus test of significance. Results are means; standard deviations are presented in parentheses.

[a] double standard $n = 332$; abstinence $n = 331$; positive-sexuality $n = 332$.

[b] double standard $n = 188$; abstinence $n = 187$; positive-sexuality $n = 188$.

[c] double standard $n = 144$; abstinence $n = 144$; positive-sexuality $n = 144$.

$^{+}$ $p \leq .10$.

* $p \leq .05$.

*** $p \leq .001$.

and men do not differ to a statistically significant degree in their scores on the measure of positive-sexuality messages received from either parents (women: 1.07; men: 1.14) or friends (women: 1.98; men: 1.97).

Table 3 presents results from the dependent variables. Those estimates suggest that participants receive relatively high scores concerning sexual self-efficacy (i.e., the ability to negotiate condom use) and comfort in sexual communication. Respondents report some inauthenticity. They also report some endorsement of rape myths and relatively low numbers of coercive experiences (see table 3 for details).

Testing the Contributions of Discourses to Sexual Health Outcomes

Zero-order correlations are conducted to determine links among the main outcome variables and relevant demographic correlates. Multiple regressions are used to examine each discourse's associations with the dependent variables. Two sets of multiple regression analyses are performed for each gender. In the first set, the three sexual agency variables (sexual self-efficacy, comfort in sexual communication, and inauthentic voice) serve as dependent variables. Relevant demographic correlates are included in the step 1 estimates, and all six discourse variables are entered simultaneously in step 2. For the second set of multiple regression analyses, the three variables for unwanted sexual experiences (endorsement of rape myths, victimization experiences, and perpetration experiences) serve as dependent variables; relevant demographic correlates are included in step 1, and all discourse variables are entered simultaneously

Table 3

AMOUNTS OF SEXUAL AGENCY AND SEXUAL COERCION EXPERIENCED

		All			Female			Male			Sex Difference
	Range	*n*	*M*	SD	*n*	*M*	SD	*n*	*M*	SD	(*F*)
Self-efficacy	1.00–5.00	326	3.93	.89	186	3.84	.91	140	4.04	.85	1.851
CISC	0–4.00	322	2.45	.72	180	2.40	.74	142	2.52	.68	2.058
Inauthentic voice	1.00–6.00	327	3.05	.67	186	3.06	.67	141	3.03	.68	.049
Rape myths	1.00–7.00	319	2.41	.72	181	2.24	.68	138	2.62	.72	1.499
Victimization	0–12.00	325	1.23	2.10	185	1.52	2.26	140	.85	1.81	12.023***
Perpetration	0–15.00	328	.83	1.71	187	.49	1.01	141	1.27	2.26	29.584***

NOTE.—*M* = mean; *F* = omnibus test of significance; CISC = comfort in sexual communication; "victimization" indicates experience of being sexually coerced; "perpetration" indicates sexually coercive behavior.

*** $p \leq .001$.

in step 2. Results from these analyses are presented in tables 4 and 5. The results for women and men are discussed separately below, one discourse at a time.

The first hypothesis (1b and 1c) predicts that sexual double-standard messages are negatively linked with young women's sexual agency and experience of perpetration but positively associated with their experience of sexual victimization and with endorsement of rape myths; among young men, relationships are posited to run in the opposite direction, such that double-standard messages are hypothesized to be positively linked to their sexual agency, endorsement of rape myths, and perpetration but negatively linked to sexual victimization. As results in table 4 suggest, a negative and statistically significant association emerges between the measure of sexual double-standard messages from friends and the measure of young women's comfort in sexual communication. In addition, the measure of sexual double-standard messages from friends is estimated to be positively linked with young women's score on the measure of endorsement of rape myths. The estimates indicate that double-standard messages are not associated with experiences of victimization or perpetration (although there is a marginally positive association between the measures of sexual double-standard messages from parents and perpetration experiences).

As results in table 5 indicate, and as hypothesized, the measure of sexual double-standard messages from friends is positively and statistically significantly linked with the measure of young men's endorsement of rape myths and with their measured experiences of perpetration. Such messages from parents are estimated to be positively and statistically significantly associated with young men's experience of both sexual victimiza-

Table 4

Regression Analyses Testing Associations between Discourses and Sexual Outcomes in Young Women

	Self-Efficacy	CISC	Inauthentic Voice	Rape Myths	Victimization	Perpetration
1. Demographics:						
Asian ethnicity	−.26***	−.11	−.00	.22**	−.21**	−.17*
Latino ethnicity	−.02	−.03	.07	−.02	−.05	−.06
Foreign raised	−.02	−.11	.06	.17*	.04	.07
Religiosity	−.04	−.03	.07	.08	−.13^{+}	−.12
Adjusted R^2	.047	.01	−.007	.095	.032	.016
2. Demographics and discourses:						
Asian ethnicity	−.15^{+}	.03	−.11	.17*	−.17*	−.19*
Latino ethnicity	.02	.02	.04	−.04	−.04	−.073
Foreign raised	−.04	−.15*	.04	.18*	.01	.028
Religiosity	.05	.00	−.01	.06	−.04	−.088
Double standard—parents	.12	.13	−.00	−.13	.09	.19^{+}
Double standard—friends	−.10	−.20*	.05	.29**	.15	.113
Abstinence—parents	−.36***	−.23*	.11	.16	−.29**	−.25*
Abstinence—friends	.11	.12	.09	−.08	.04	.122
Positive sex—parents	.07	.14	−.25*	.06	−.03	−.23*
Positive sex—friends	.25*	.39***	.05	−.24*	.06	.23*
Adjusted R^2	.155	.212	.026	.133	.073	.108
Change in adjusted R^2	.108	.200	.033	.038	.041	.092
F of change	4.764***	8.115***	2.016^{+}	2.246*	2.285*	4.043***
F of final model	4.325***	5.642***	1.489	3.702***	2.399*	3.190***

Note.—CISC = comfort in sexual communication; "victimization" indicates experience of being sexually coerced; "perpetration" indicates sexually coercive behavior; F refers to an omnibus test of significance for the regression model.

$^{+}$ $p \leq .10$.
* $p \leq .05$.
** $p \leq .01$.
*** $p \leq .001$.

Table 5

Regression Analyses Testing Associations between Discourses and Sexual Outcomes in Young Men

	Self-Efficacy	CISC	Inauthentic Voice	Rape Myths	Victimization	Perpetration
1. Demographics:						
Asian ethnicity	−.21*	−.32***	.15^{+}	.083	−.08	−.03
Latino ethnicity	.13	.08	.05	−.056	.18*	.09
Foreign raised	.09	.09	−.04	.17^{+}	.05	.20*
Religiosity	−.32***	−.10	.16^{+}	.039	−.14^{+}	−.10
Adjusted R^2	.126	.084	.018	.023	.027	.022
2. Demographics and discourses:						
Asian ethnicity	.07	−.08	.04	.02	−.07	−.02
Latino ethnicity	.13^{+}	.07	.06	−.09	.16^{+}	.06
Foreign raised	.04	.02	−.00	.10	−.01	.12
Religiosity	−.20*	.06	.06	.06	−.14	−.04
Double standard—parents	−.01	.05	−.19	.22^{+}	.25*	.25*
Double standard—friends	−.11	.01	.15	.33*	.15	.36*
Abstinence—parents	−.13	−.21*	.09	−.24*	.08	−.07
Abstinence—friends	−.02	−.09	.14	.13	−.07	−.08
Positive sex—parents	.38***	.24*	−.13	−.22^{+}	−.13	−.17
Positive sex—friends	.31*	.26*	−.06	−.15	.01	−.02
Adjusted R^2	.343	.273	.056	.109	.110	.163
Change in adjusted R^2	.217	.189	.038	.086	.083	.141
F of change	8.424***	6.797***	1.905^{+}	3.712**	3.037**	4.734***
F of final model	8.243***	6.171***	1.856^{+}	3.031**	2.677**	3.675***

Note.—CISC = comfort in sexual communication; "victimization" indicates experience of being sexually coerced; "perpetration" indicates sexually coercive behavior; F refers to an omnibus test of significance for the regression model.

$^{+}$ $p \leq .10$.
* $p \leq .05$.
** $p \leq .01$.
*** $p \leq .001$.

tion and perpetration. The measure of double-standard messages from parents is marginally associated with the measure of endorsement of rape myths. In these estimates, the measure of sexual double-standard messages is not statistically significantly associated with either the measure of young men's comfort in sexual communication or with the measure of inauthenticity.

In the second hypothesis, the authors posit that young women receive more sexual abstinence messages than do young men and that exposure to those messages is negatively associated with sexual agency among both young men and women. Also, receipt of abstinence messages is hypothesized to be positively associated with victimization, perpetration, and endorsement of rape myths. To test this second set of hypotheses, the authors examine links among sexual abstinence messages, sexual agency variables, and sexual coercion variables. As hypothesized, the measure of sexual abstinence messages from parents is negatively and statistically significantly associated with the measure of young women's sexual self-efficacy and comfort in sexual communication (table 4); unexpectedly, such messages from parents also are estimated to be negatively linked with sexual victimization and perpetration among young women. Among young men, sexual abstinence messages are estimated to be negatively linked with comfort in sexual communication as well (table 5). The results indicate that abstinence messages are not statistically significantly associated with sexual victimization or perpetration, but an unexpected, negative, and statistically significant association emerges between the measures of abstinence messages from parents and endorsement of rape myths.

In the third hypothesis, the authors predict that positive-sexuality messages will be positively associated with sexual agency but negatively associated with endorsement of rape myths, victimization, and perpetration. Those associations are posited to hold for both young women and young men. As hypothesized, positive-sexuality messages from parents are estimated to be negatively linked with inauthenticity (i.e., positively associated with authentic communication) among young women (table 4). Also as predicted, the measure of messages from friends is positively associated with the measures of young women's sexual self-efficacy and comfort in sexual communication but negatively related with the measure of their endorsement of rape myths. Positive-sexuality messages from parents are estimated to be negatively linked with perpetration among young women, but such messages from friends are estimated to be positively associated with perpetration by those women. As hypothesized, the measures of positive-sexuality messages from parents and friends are estimated to be positively related to the measures of young men's self-efficacy and comfort in sexual communication (table 5). Such messages from parents also are estimated to be negatively associated with young men's endorsement of rape myths, but this association rises only to the level of marginal statistical significance.

Although the demographic correlates in tables 4 and 5 explain a substantial amount of variance in some of the equations (the most substantial portion coming from respondents of Asian or Pacific Islander ethnicity), the sexual discourse variables do increase the adjusted R^2 result in both sets of regressions. For young women, the sexual discourse variables explain at least some variance beyond that accounted for by the demographic correlates for each of the six dependent variables; the discourses account for an additional 11 percent of the variance of sexual self-efficacy, 20 percent of the variance of comfort in sexual communication, and 3 percent of the variance of inauthentic voice (table 4). The discourses also account for 4 percent of the variance in endorsement of rape myths, 4 percent of the variance in victimization, and 9 percent of the variance in perpetration. Among young men, the sexual discourse variables account for 22 percent of the variance of sexual self-efficacy, 19 percent of the variance of comfort in sexual communication, and 4 percent of the variance of inauthentic voice (table 5). The discourses also account for 9 percent of the variance in endorsement of rape myths, 8 percent of the variance in victimization, and 14 percent of the variance in perpetration.

Discussion

The purpose of this study is to consider the sexual health of adolescents and emerging adults beyond what can be learned from measuring general amounts of communication received and from examining dichotomous measures of sexual activity. It investigates how exposure to specific sexual messages contributes to a range of sexual attitudes and behaviors. Although adolescents and emerging adults are likely to glean messages about sexuality from a variety of sources (e.g., parents, school, and media), the study focuses on parents and friends as purveyors of sexual information. Many of the results are consistent with existing research on parent-youth sexual communication. This study also adds to the literature by focusing on friends as an information source (the literature on this exists but is small), by considering the effect of the specific content of sexual information received, and by linking messages to sexual communication and sexual coercion outcomes. (There is a separate literature on sexual coercion, but with a few exceptions [e.g., Littleton and Axsom 2003; Ryan 2011], the two literatures are not integrated.) Furthermore, this study conceptualizes the sexual health and safety of youth as a set of holistic issues that include sexual communication and the avoidance of unwanted experiences. It thus adds to a small but emerging body of research in this area (e.g., Bay-Cheng 2010).

The findings document four general patterns. First, the content of students' sexual communications is found to differ in important ways by the source of the message and by the gender of the recipient. Participants re-

port receiving more double-standard and positive-sexuality messages from friends than from parents; abstinence messages reportedly come more often from parents than from friends. This pattern is consistent with both the literature on abstinence messages and with current trends; in other studies, adolescents report being more likely to talk with their friends about sex than with any other contact (e.g., Pistella and Bonati 1998; Lefkowitz et al. 2004). Participants in the current study also report that the level of positive-sexuality messages received is higher than that of other messages. This is a new finding. It may reflect a shift in societal norms about sexuality and also participants' own feelings or biases regarding sexuality. Compared with their male counterparts, young women are found to receive more double-standard and sexual abstinence messages from parents and marginally more abstinence messages from friends. These findings are fairly consistent with the literature, which suggests that girls receive more fear- and abstinence-based messages than boys do, and boys receive more permissive messages (Darling and Hicks 1982; DiIorio et al. 1999; Downie and Coates 1999; Epstein and Ward 2008). This study also makes a new contribution by exploring the potential effects of this differential socialization of young men and women.

Second, findings indicate that, as expected, heavier exposure to sexual double-standard messages is associated with less comfort in sexual communication among young women but with more endorsement of rape myths among both genders as well as with more sexual victimization and more perpetration among young men. Matching trends in the field (Hynie and Lydon 1995; Crawford and Popp 2003; Schleicher and Gilbert 2005), the current findings help to illustrate the prevalence and concerning influence of sexual double-standard messages in society. The estimated link that emerges between sexual double-standard messages from friends and young women's comfort in sexual communication, an association that is both negative and statistically significant, supports previous findings that young women are encouraged to be passive in heterosexual relationships. The finding also adds to the literature by linking these passive messages to behaviors in sexual situations. Sexual double-standard messages from friends are also found to be positively associated with endorsement of rape myths in both genders and with perpetration among young men. The current critical findings illustrate the estimated effect of sexual messages from friends and highlight socialization's connection to potentially critical consequences.

Third, findings indicate that heavier exposure to sexual abstinence messages from parents is associated with lower levels of comfort in sexual communication and with fewer experiences of victimization among young women; among young men, higher exposure to abstinence messages from parents is associated with lower levels of comfort in sexual communication and with lower endorsement of rape myths. Sexual abstinence messages

from parents are negatively linked with comfort in sexual communication among both young women and young men.

Less sexual agency could mean less aggressiveness in sexual situations, but it could also mean lower amounts of constructive communication. It bears mentioning that the findings, though similar for the genders, could have very different implications for women. More research is needed in this area and especially into the outcomes for young men, who seem to be particularly understudied (Epstein and Ward 2008). Young men are found to receive much lower levels of abstinence messages than young women do, and the finding is consistent with previous research (Darling and Hicks 1982; DiIorio et al. 1999; Downie and Coates 1999). This difference may contribute to gender dynamics in which women continue to hold traditional "gatekeeper" roles (Schleicher and Gilbert 2005, 9) and men continue to try to convince or coerce young women to have sex.

Sexual abstinence messages may have some desirable effects, such as contributing to the reduction of sexual coercion. In this study, higher exposure to abstinence messages from parents is linked with less victimization and less perpetration among young women as well as with lower endorsement of rape myths among young men. However, sexual abstinence messages have many possible effects, and there is still much to learn. The findings here offer a glimpse of how nuanced and multifaceted these messages may be. The paucity of knowledge about such messages is concerning in a country that peddled abstinence messages so freely in recent years, particularly as a codified part of school curricula. It is also notable that abstinence messages from friends yield no statistically significant findings.

One possible characteristic of sexual abstinence messages may be that they provide youth with little or no information on relationships and sex (Luker 2006). These content omissions may leave young people vulnerable to traditional gender and sexual attitudes or may leave them questioning how to handle sexual situations. Further research is needed on abstinence messages. In particular, research should examine the information that such messages relay (i.e., one should wait to have sex), information that may be omitted (e.g., how to use a condom), and how the messages are dispensed to both boys and girls.

Fourth, findings from this study indicate that, as expected, the measure of exposure to positive-sexuality messages is positively associated with the measure of positive communication outcomes and negatively associated with the measure of endorsement of rape myths among both women and men. Among young women, higher exposure to positive-sexuality messages is estimated to be linked with lower levels of inauthentic voice (or with more authentic communications) when the messages are received from parents. Higher exposure is also estimated to be associated with higher levels of sexual self-efficacy and comfort in sex-

ual communication when the messages are received from friends. Here emerges a link from positive-sexuality messages to possibly healthy and desirable outcomes. Society tends to discourage young people from expressing themselves sexually (Elliott 2010*a*), but sexual messages and sexually promiscuous images abound in a complex and often-confusing cultural landscape (Ward 2003; Bay-Cheng 2010; Elliott 2010*b*). As the findings illustrate, an effort to generate positive and healthy messages about sexuality, rather than polarized ones (Luker 2006), might contribute to healthier outcomes.

Among young women, higher exposure to positive-sexuality messages is also estimated to be linked with lower report of sexual perpetration when the messages come from parents and with higher levels of perpetration when they come from friends. This puzzling finding highlights the ways in which similar messages from different sources may be received differently and may operate differently. The findings add to the literature that explores messages from parents (e.g., Downie and Coates 1999) and friends (e.g., Lefkowitz et al. 2004) but rarely examines them together. The findings also make a contribution by beginning to link the sex education and sexual violence literatures. Despite a few notable exceptions (e.g., Littleton and Axsom 2003; Ryan 2011), research pays little attention to this understudied relationship. The findings also reinforce the assertion that it is not sufficient to examine the amounts of sexual information received by young people. In suggesting that similar messages from different sources may be interpreted quite differently, the study illustrates how research can meet the need to delve more deeply beyond general themes into the details of sexual content communicated. Further study could usefully examine how directly contradictory messages are negotiated and understood by youth.

Among young men, positive-sexuality messages are found to be positively associated with sexual self-efficacy and comfort in sexual communication. These results are consistent with the hypothesis that receiving positive and egalitarian messages about sexuality will yield positive feelings about one's own sexual desires and about one's ability to function safely and effectively within sexual contexts. An unexpected finding is that, with the exception of a marginally negative association between positive-sexuality messages and endorsement of rape myths, such messages are not found to be statistically significantly linked with unwanted sexual experience outcomes.

In examining how these different sexual discourses and messages might work together, several findings emerge. Overall, results from the regressions suggest that sexual self-efficacy is negatively linked with parental abstinence messages among young women and positively linked with positive-sexuality messages among both genders. This suggests that young people may receive conflicting sexual messages, which could create confusion. Sim-

ilarly, the measure of comfort in sexual communication is negatively associated with the measure of young women's receipt of double-standard messages from friends and with the measures of both genders' receipt of abstinence messages from parents. Among both genders, the measure of exposure to double-standard messages is positively related with the measure of positive-sexuality messages from friends, but the measure of comfort in sexual communication among young men is only associated with the measure of such messages from parents. Gender-based differences in the correlates of exposure to discourses again suggest the potential for conflict that could affect behavior.

Rape myth endorsement's respective associations with the measures of double-standard, abstinence, and positive-sexuality messages suggest that, because these messages are not received in a vacuum, they may create conflict around such issues as rape myth attitudes if the messages from several discourses are received simultaneously. Experiences of sexual coercion are linked with double-standard messages in several areas. Sexual perpetration is estimated to be marginally linked with double-standard messages among young women; both victimization and perpetration are estimated to be linked with receipt of double-standard messages among young men. The series of findings on rape myth endorsement and sexual coercion (both victimization and perpetration) reinforces the impression that there is a need to look much more closely at the messages young people receive about gender and sexuality. The findings also suggest that it is important to closely consider the possible consequences of such messages. Sexual double-standard messages are particularly pervasive in society, proliferating across multiple contexts (Hynie and Lydon 1995; Crawford and Popp 2003; Aubrey 2004; Schleicher and Gilbert 2005) and may contribute to adverse behavioral outcomes more often than is realized.

Limitations

This study has a number of notable limitations. A university sample is appropriate to the research questions asked in this study because the study focuses on emerging adults, but the sample is also somewhat homogeneous in terms of race, ethnicity, and socioeconomic status. Future research could focus on more heterogeneous populations, including a noncollege sample. The sample is also homogeneous in terms of sexual orientation. It is critical to explore not only the experiences and attitudes of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender youth but also the attitudes and experiences occurring within these youth's relationships. An additional limitation concerns the positive-sexuality subscale, which is less robust than the double-standard and sexual abstinence subscales. The authors hope to improve the subscale in future studies. Sexual self-efficacy is nar-

rowly measured as efficacy in condom use; a broader measure might reveal additional nuance. Finally, use of regressions implies causality and temporal relationships among independent and dependent variables; the authors acknowledge the fluid nature of both information transfer and sexual experiences throughout adolescence and emerging adulthood. Future efforts can improve upon this research by conducting experimental or longitudinal studies.

Implications and Conclusion

In this study, three sets of important findings emerge. First, sexual socialization comes from multiple sources, including parents and friends. Second, sexual messages are found to be linked with sexual agency and sexual coercion outcomes; the finding suggests a link between messages received and behaviors enacted. Third, young men and women appear to receive different types of messages; these differences invite further study and could create conflict in heterosexual encounters. Taken together, these results suggest a need to further consider how salient sexual discourses may both promote and deter healthy communication. They also suggest that such discourses may be precursors to coercive or unwanted experiences.

Sexual communication and sexual coercion are just two of the many constructs affecting the sexual health of youth. More research is needed, including a further examination of how these discourses might interact or conflict. A social work research perspective can build upon the current study. Issues of education, race, culture, and socioeconomic status need to be considered further, particularly in school or community-based samples. An intersectional perspective is critical to identifying how adolescents receive messages and interact with one another. Results suggest that it will also be useful to further examine issues of gender and power embedded within these messages, as well as the possibly inadvertent reinforcement and reproduction of gendered power differentials that may occur. Research is needed to further clarify the potential consequences of these messages.

The sexual health of adolescents and emerging adults is a complex and multifaceted arena fraught with issues. It is the belief of these authors that young people and the field of social work can benefit from a holistic, strengths-based perspective that combines research, policy, and practice. Despite controversy about whether young people should be having sex, a controversy unlikely to be resolved soon, social workers can still engender access to information, open communication among young people (and their parents), and positive feelings about oneself and one's relationships.

Appendix A

Sexual Socialization Subscale Items

Sexual Double-Standard Subscale

This 14-item subscale captures responses to the following statements:

- Men lose respect for women who sleep with them too early in a relationship.
- Men want sex; women want relationships.
- It is better for a woman to use her "feminine charm" (e.g., flirting, body language) to indicate her interest indirectly than to express it directly.
- Men think about sex all the time.
- It's difficult for men to resist their sexual urges.
- It is up to women to limit the sexual advances of men and to keep men from "going too far."
- In dating, the goal for men is "to score" with as many women as they can.
- It is worse for a woman to sleep around than it is for a man.
- Men want as much as they can get on a first date.
- Men should be the initiators in romantic relations and should be the ones to ask women out.
- In order to catch a man, a woman should not be too friendly or available but should play "hard to get."
- Men are most interested in women as potential sex partners and don't want to be "just friends" with them.
- Men will say whatever they need to say to get a woman into bed.
- It's a man's nature to have a roaming eye.

Sexual Abstinence Subscale

This 11-item subscale examines messages that emphasize abstinence:

- The primary goal of sexual intercourse is to have children.
- It is not appropriate to hug and kiss your partner in front of members of your family.
- Oral sex is dirty.
- Sex outside of marriage is a sin.
- Sex belongs only in married relationships.
- People who have premarital sexual relations risk bringing shame to the family name.
- It is inappropriate to masturbate or touch yourself for sexual pleasure.
- You should abstain from sex until marriage to avoid getting pregnant or getting someone pregnant.
- Sex is a private matter and should not be discussed in public.
- People who have sex before marriage typically regret it later.
- Abstinence is the best policy. Just say no.

Positive Sexuality Subscale

This eight-item subscale captures responses to the following:

Having sex is just something fun to do.
No sexual act should be considered immoral as long as both parties are consenting adults.
Women have just as many sexual urges and desires as men.
Having sex should be viewed as just a normal part of dating relationships.
The human body is nothing to be ashamed of.
It is perfectly acceptable for women to make the first move and to ask men out directly.
Being sexual is a natural part of being human.
Only you can know when you are ready for sex.

Note

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The Challenge of Targeting Services: A Typology of Public-Housing Residents

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This article focuses on one of the major challenges in serving vulnerable families: identifying which clients require intensive services and which would benefit from a less expensive approach. Using data collected as part of an intensive family-case-management demonstration in public housing in Chicago, the study conducts cluster analysis to develop a typology that can inform the targeting of effective, streamlined service delivery. The analysis identifies three groups of residents with distinct sets of characteristics; they are labeled "Striving," "Severely Distressed," and "High Risk." Describing the groups, the study explores a potential service approach for each.

Twenty years ago, dilapidated, high-crime public-housing developments populated by impoverished households were a powerful symbol of the failures of US social welfare policy. Since that time, policy makers have sought to turn public and assisted housing into a catalyst to help low-income households escape poverty (Popkin et al. 2004; Turner, Popkin, and Rawlings 2009). Public-housing residents face numerous barriers to self-sufficiency: low educational attainment, poor mental and physical health,

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limited ties to social networks that facilitate access to jobs, and physical isolation from opportunity (Popkin, Cunningham, and Burt 2005; Turney et al. 2006). Several initiatives attempt to help residents overcome these barriers, relocating residents to higher-opportunity areas, offering alternative rent structures, and implementing housing-plus-services models. This study focuses on the historical and potential efficacy of the housing-plus-services approach, which it defines as "permanent affordable housing that incorporates various levels of services provided by trained professionals for whom service delivery, not property management, is the primary responsibility" (National Low Income Housing Coalition 2010, 139).

Evidence from evaluations of the selected federal initiatives suggests that increasing public-housing residents' geographic access to opportunity improves their quality of life but is not enough to help them overcome their multiple personal and structural barriers to self-sufficiency. In the Moving to Opportunity Demonstration, the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) offered residents in high-poverty public-housing developments the chance to relocate to so-called opportunity areas where poverty levels are lower. Although research finds that the demonstration's participants experience substantial improvements in housing quality, neighborhood safety, and some aspects of mental and physical health, they are not found to show improvement in employment and educational attainment relative to a control group that received no assistance (Ludwig et al. 2008; Briggs, Popkin, and Goering 2010). The Housing and Opportunities for People Everywhere (HOPE) VI program, HUD's largest effort to transform the nation's most severely distressed public housing into mixed-income communities, included limited funding for supportive services (Bratt 2008). The five-city HOPE VI Panel Study finds that HOPE VI helped move residents to safer, lower-poverty neighborhoods but that relocation does not translate to gains in employment, earnings, or health (Popkin, Levy, and Buron 2009).

In contrast, federal initiatives that include supportive services appear to achieve some success in moving residents toward self-sufficiency. Offering employment services, rent incentives, and community support for work, HUD's Jobs-Plus program is found to help residents achieve employment and earnings increases (Bloom et al. 2005). The Family Self-Sufficiency Program, established by HUD in 1990, shows promise in helping families living in public or assisted housing to move toward economic self-sufficiency by improving earnings and building assets. One preliminary evaluation of the program finds that participating families increased their median income by 72 percent over 4 years; the increase is twice as much as that found for a similar group not enrolled in the program (Ficke, Piesse, and JBS International 2004).

Research also finds that housing-plus-services models show potential to improve well-being among seniors and the disabled. The Seattle Hous-

ing Authority's Low Income Public Housing Program, supported by a Resident Service Delivery Model—Elderly/Persons with Disabilities grant through HUD's Resident Opportunity and Self-Sufficiency program, provided a group of elderly and disabled residents with grocery delivery support, referral resources, case management services, communal activities and events, and health and wellness programming. Researchers find that those targeted for such services have greater social interaction, fewer chronic conditions, and lower eviction rates than those not targeted; exposure is found to increase uptake of preventative health procedures (Siu 2009). Similar on-site service programs for the elderly in Massachusetts (Mollica and Morris 2005) and Rockville, Maryland (Sheehan and Guzzardo 2008), are found to have favorable outcomes (Golant, Parsons, and Boling 2010).

Housing policies and programs that incorporate supportive services for public- and assisted-housing residents show potential as antipoverty strategies (Bratt 2008). Indeed, one of the five goals in HUD's 2010–15 strategic plan commits the department to use housing as a platform for improving health and educational outcomes as well as for promoting economic self-sufficiency (HUD 2010). Providing supportive services through housing also is found to have direct effects on housing tenure and stability. Those are important intermediate outcomes for residents as well as for housing authorities and property managers (Lipton et al. 2000; Tsemberis, Gulcur, and Nakae 2004).

Housing authority investments in resident supportive services, although found to be successful in improving resident outcomes, remain the exception and not the rule. The vast majority of public-housing authorities, particularly small ones, view their mission as building and maintaining the so-called bricks and mortar of affordable housing. Recently, however, large public-housing authorities, especially those participating in HUD's Moving to Work program, recognized that housing alone may not be enough to stabilize their residents and developments. These authorities are embracing the potential of human services. One ongoing effort that reflects this movement is the Housing Opportunity and Services Together demonstration, which seeks to test strategies in subsidized housing developments in Chicago, Portland, and Washington, DC. The efforts use housing as a platform for services intended to improve the life chances of vulnerable youth and adults (Popkin et al. 2012).

During the expansion of this movement to combine public housing and supportive services, it has become clear that not all families in public housing need intensive supportive services and that service needs are not static; needs change, depending on a number of factors related to mental health, economic situation, and personal circumstances. Yet there is little research on how to effectively target services in public and assisted housing. This article focuses on one of the major challenges for providers serv-

ing vulnerable families: identifying which clients require intensive services and which need only a light touch.[1] In matching residents with services, service providers typically rely solely on case manager assessments or perceptions.

The key research question in this study is whether public-housing residents can be effectively grouped using empirical analysis in a way that promotes the targeting of services. Data come from the Chicago Family Case Management Demonstration, an innovative effort to test the feasibility of using public and assisted housing as a platform for providing services to vulnerable families. The demonstration also sought to develop a typology that can serve as a template for targeting and delivering wraparound services in public- and assisted-housing settings, including settings that involve vouchers and units integrated into mixed-income developments. The demonstration involved a unique partnership of city agencies, researchers, social service providers, and private foundations. Participants include the Urban Institute, the Chicago Housing Authority (CHA), Heartland Human Care Services, and Housing Choice Partners.

Demonstration Background and Motivation

By expanding staffing levels, the Chicago Family Case Management Demonstration allowed service providers at CHA's Madden Park and Ida B. Wells Homes and the Dearborn Homes to dramatically lower caseloads from 55 cases per case manager to about half that number (Popkin et al. 2008). The demonstration ran from March 2007 to March 2010. It offered new training for case managers and introduced several new service components, providing residents with intensive case-management services, transitional jobs, financial literacy training, and relocation counseling. These changes forced case managers to focus on outreach to caseload clients not previously engaged in services and to increase the frequency of their meetings with all clients. An evaluation finds that engagement rose as a result of these changes (Popkin et al. 2010). Before the start of the demonstration, case managers engaged less than 50 percent of residents in services, but the percentage rose to nearly 90 by summer 2009; staff met with residents an average of once per month before the demonstration but three to four times per month by 2009.

In qualitative interviews, case managers report that the reduction in caseloads actually made their work more challenging. They indicate that they encountered one tough problem after another in conducting outreach to residents who previously resisted services: schizophrenic residents who stopped taking their medications and refused to open the

1. In using the term "providers," this article generally refers to service providers, which include human service organizations that deliver child welfare, employment, relocation, physical health, clinical substance abuse treatment, and elderly care services.

door; women with severe depression; mothers at risk of losing custody of their children; grandmothers struggling to care for several grandchildren, some of whom were in trouble with the law; and substance users who were so in debt to drug dealers that the dealers took over their apartments. The case managers report that increasing the frequency of meetings with clients enabled them to unpack the families' situations, and the gravity of the problems grew as they did so (Popkin et al. 2008; Popkin and Getsinger 2010).

The interviewed case managers also recall realizing that they needed to triage cases, deciding which clients most require their intensive focus. Indicating that a weekly check-in proved bothersome for some residents who are basically stable and doing well, the staff report that such meetings eroded the clients' hard-won trust in them. In contrast, managers discuss other residents who required daily meetings to ensure medication adherence, follow-through on substance-use rehabilitation, or successful navigation of a web of other systems and providers. Site supervisors and the program director report meeting regularly with staff to help them navigate these challenges and to craft an approach that would help them adjust to residents' needs while meeting the requirements of the demonstration (Theodos et al. 2010).

It became clear to site supervisors and the program director that the case managers would benefit from an assessment tool to help them in their efforts to target services effectively and in making decisions about allocations of time and resources. As noted earlier, targeting is a challenging problem in serving other vulnerable populations, most notably homeless families (Culhane and Metraux 2008; Northwest Institute for Children and Families 2008). However, despite the need, there has been relatively little focus on developing and testing assessment tools. The authors hypothesize that clustering techniques can be used to identify groups of residents with different sets of needs and strengths. This typology is intended to help meet practitioners' need for an effective strategy to identify which clients require targeted services.

Review of the Literature on Assessment Tools

There is little precedent for using strategies to target intensive wraparound services to the most vulnerable families in public or assisted housing. However, considerable work investigates ways to assess the needs of and target services to other vulnerable populations, particularly those in the homelessness, child welfare, mental health, and criminal justice systems. Like vulnerable public-housing residents, participants in these systems have varying levels of need and face a range of challenges and barriers.

In an era of constrained fiscal resources, accurately matching residents with services is critical. The fields of psychiatry, alcoholism treatment, and

criminology have long employed typological research. The underlying assumption of such scholarship is that treatment outcomes can be improved by matching participants with the most appropriate levels of care (Jahiel and Babor 2007). Over the past 2 decades, homelessness researchers have applied the assessment processes identified in these fields. For example, the evaluation of the Sound Families Initiative, a large-scale effort to provide housing and services to homeless families in the Seattle region, finds that adequate up-front assessment of the participants' needs is an important determinant of the initiative's success (Bodonyi 2008). Yet, given the paucity of evidence validating assessment approaches and tools, there is much confusion among practitioners about how best to target services.

Across these various service systems, providers deploy four broad approaches to assess need: clinical assessment questionnaires, structured interviews, self-report questionnaires and checklists, and actuarial assessments. The most common approach across these service systems is a clinical assessment. Typically, this involves a professional administering a questionnaire or checklist that covers a series of topics. Psychiatry has a long tradition of conducting clinical assessments to diagnose depression, schizophrenia, and other mental disorders (Hamilton 1960, 1967; Montgomery and Åsberg 1979). In the homelessness arena, assessments gauge the needs of homeless individuals during the program intake process. They are based on each individual's housing, legal, substance abuse, mental and physical health, and employment histories. Service providers use the Arizona Self-Sufficiency Matrix to rate participants on a five-point scale (1 = in crisis; 2 = vulnerable; 3 = safe; 4 = building capacity; 5 = empowered), which determines whether the individual should be placed in transitional housing or permanent supportive housing (Abt Associates 2006). In Minnesota, Hennepin County's Rapid Exit Screening uses a similar triaging approach to place homeless families into three categories, and assignments are based on the number of housing barriers they face (Burt, Pearson, and Montgomery 2006). In the child welfare sphere, practitioners developed, tested, and validated such assessment tools as the North Carolina Family Assessment Scale for Reunification, which uses a six-point scale to assess risk across five domains. The scale measures the risk of reuniting families from which children have been removed after neglect (Johnson et al. 2006).

Structured interviews are another popular method. They tend to be more open-ended than questionnaires, and they rely on the expertise of the trained interviewer to gauge participants' barriers through a series of questions. Structured interviews can be used independently or coupled with clinical questionnaires (Sheehan and Guzzardo 2008). One study comparing mental health screening strategies for homeless individuals finds that diagnoses differ across the assessment strategies and that only the structured clinical interview is able to distinguish a mental disorder from a substance abuse problem (Bellavia and Toro 1999). Criminal justice providers also

employ structured interviews as part of recidivism-reduction strategies; a professional asks an offender a series of nonstandardized questions to determine the offender's risk profile (Lowenkamp, Holsinger, and Latessa 2001).

Another strategy is to have patients or clients self-report symptoms and barriers using structured questionnaires or checklists. Such self-report questionnaires also are extremely popular in diagnosing mental health problems (Beck et al. 1961, 1996; Zung 1965; Carroll et al. 1981; Kroenke, Spitzer, and Williams 2001). This assessment strategy can be implemented with relatively little administrative burden, but its accuracy depends on the accuracy of the information reported.

The final approach, actuarial assessment, is used principally in the criminal justice arena and remains largely untested in other service systems. Practitioners use actuarial assessments to forecast recidivism from empirically demonstrated predictors of criminal behavior. One study finds that this approach is a more effective predictor of reoffending than are clinical assessments (Lowenkamp et al. 2001). However, most social service fields lack the robust administrative data available in the criminal justice system.

All of these strategies may be useful for thinking about how to shape effective strategies that target the most vulnerable public- and assisted-housing families, a very high-need population that faces many barriers to self-sufficiency. This research seeks to address the gap in evidence on assessment approaches and tools, using empirical data to develop a typology of vulnerable families.

Study Sites, Data, and Method

Study Sites

This research analyzes data collected as part of the Chicago Family Case Management Demonstration, which provided intensive services to families and elderly residents in two CHA public-housing developments: the Madden Park and Ida B. Wells Homes and the Dearborn Homes. Located on the city's near–south side, the 3,000 units in the Madden Park and Ida Wells projects constituted one of the CHA's largest public-housing complexes. When the demonstration began in 2007, the CHA was partway through demolition of the complex, and only about 300 households lived in the remaining buildings (Popkin et al. 2008). All the residents were African American. Most were long-term public-housing residents with low incomes and poor physical and mental health. In response to rapidly deteriorating conditions, the CHA shuttered the Madden-Wells complex in August 2008, requiring all households to move during the demonstration.

The Dearborn Homes are an 800-unit development of six- and nine-story buildings on State Street, about a mile south of Chicago's central business district, the Loop (Bowly 1978). During the first phases of the Plan for

Transformation, the CHA used units in the Dearborn Homes as replacement housing for residents who vacated the other condemned developments and failed to meet the criteria for temporary vouchers or mixed-income housing.[2] The resulting influx of residents from Robert Taylor Homes and Stateway Gardens created a volatile situation in Dearborn, with multiple gangs competing for territory. The CHA received a federal grant to comprehensively rehabilitate Dearborn and completed the work by 2011, meaning nearly all Dearborn residents needed to move from their homes during the demonstration. Many moved temporarily to other units in the Dearborn Homes.

The developments were selected to participate in the demonstration because of the large numbers of vulnerable households in each site. In 2007, both the Madden-Wells complex and Dearborn Homes had active, open drug markets and serious problems with gang violence. More than 50 percent of residents report at baseline that shootings and violence were big problems in their community; 77 percent report big problems with drug dealing, and 60 percent report problems with gangs. Research suggests that these dangerous conditions have serious implications for residents' well-being; residents' perceptions of safety are found to be clearly linked to their mental health (Roman et al. 2009).[3]

Data Collection

The Urban Institute collected data on leaseholders in these developments to evaluate the expanded service package provided by the Chicago Family Case Management Demonstration.[4] In summer 2007, researchers attempted to survey all leaseholders living in the development (response rate is 77 percent, and 331 respondents completed surveys). The baseline survey poses questions about a range of domains, including housing and neighborhood conditions, service use, mental and physical health, employment and economic hardship, and children's health and behavior. Respondents completed a follow-up survey in summer 2009 ($n = 287$, response rate is 90 percent; 13 respondents died between the survey waves).

To complement the survey and gain greater insights into the lives of residents, research staff conducted three rounds of semistructured focus-group interviews with every service provider, supervisor, and CHA administrator participating in the demonstration. These interviews focused on

2. The CHA's Plan for Transformation, launched in 1999, seeks to replace the CHA's most distressed high-rise developments with new mixed-income housing that reflects the current thinking on how best to provide affordable housing without creating new concentrations of poverty (Chicago Housing Authority 2000).

3. Other research on public-housing relocatees supports this finding; findings from both the HOPE VI Panel Study and the Moving to Opportunity demonstration show that adult women and girls who move from public housing to neighborhoods with lower poverty and crime levels report reductions in anxiety and depression (Popkin et al. 2009).

4. A leaseholder is presumed to be the head of the household.

activities and services implemented, barriers and obstacles to program implementation, and community contextual factors. This current research is directly informed by reports from case managers on the types of services that they find effective and ineffective for different residents. The information is used to refine this study's understanding of the resident types emerging from the analysis and also to inform recommendations for targeting services. In total, staff conducted 54 semistructured interviews and three focus groups with the service providers. Interviews typically lasted for 45 minutes, and service providers received no compensation for their time.

Urban Institute staff also conducted qualitative in-depth interviews with residents (21 adults and nine adolescents in summer 2008). Interviews lasted 1 hour. They were audio recorded and then coded to identify salient themes. The staff coded the data using the software program NVivo. In addition, the researchers gathered information from CHA administrative records and case manager reports, including whether the sampled residents chose to engage in services and whether managers referred the participants for additional services. Those data also detail participating residents' relocation history. Finally, the researchers assembled secondary data on neighborhood poverty, unemployment, crime, race, and other characteristics. These data come from the Metro Chicago Information Center.

Method

Cluster analysis is employed to differentiate among public-housing residents' barriers and needs. Clustering is a strategy for grouping residents who are similar on a number of key characteristics. Because grouping similar residents also requires distinguishing dissimilarities, cluster analysis can be said to create maximum differences between groups.

Mathematically, cluster analysis works by measuring the distance between individual observations and the center of groups of observations for a number of variables. Cases with short distances on the set of variables are grouped together. This analysis uses a nonhierarchical cluster technique known as k-means clustering, and the technique relies on Euclidean distances. The input variables are standardized using the Jaccard coefficient. The number of clusters is determined by examining statistical criteria (the maximum value of the pseudo F-statistic and the minimum of the R^2; Finch 2005), evaluating how the clusters differ on each variable used in the analysis, and vetting these results with findings from the in-depth interviews with residents and service providers. Each cluster is then assigned a label, which facilitates discussion of the cluster and application of the resident typology in practice.

This analysis relies on information about each resident's personal, family, and housing characteristics. Demographic factors included in the anal-

ysis are the respondent's age and gender. Housing factors are the length of tenure (in years) the respondent has lived in CHA housing, the number of bedrooms the household requires on the basis of CHA guidelines, and a self-reported dichotomous measure of whether the respondent reports that his or her household faced a threat of eviction from the Housing Authority in the past 12 months.

Physical health measures are overall health, which is the self-ranked health of the respondent as excellent, very good, fair, poor, and body mass index, relying on the respondent's self-reported weight and height. The definitions for current smoker and regular drinker follow the standard Center for Disease Control's National Health Interview Survey classifications. Respondents are defined as current smokers if they have ever smoked 100 cigarettes and now report smoking cigarettes every day or some days in the past month and as regular drinkers if they consume more than 12 drinks per month. Respondents are classified in this analysis as regular marijuana users if they use marijuana 12 or more times in the past year. The cluster analysis also includes a dichotomous measure for used illegal drugs (other than marijuana) if the respondent reported doing so at least once in the past 12 months.

The analysis includes mental health measures. The scale used to identify depression is a modified version of the CIDI-12, the Composite International Diagnostic Interview instrument. The series includes two types of screener questions that assess the extent of depression and the length of its duration. Five items query respondents about their experiences in the 2 weeks before the interview (the standard CIDI-12 has seven items), and a value of one is assigned for each of the experiences reported for a large share of that period. The index is then created by summing the values assigned for responses. Respondent scores of three or higher indicate a major depressive episode, which is here interpreted to indicate depression.

Anxiety is measured with responses to a series of questions called the Mental Health Inventory Five-Item Scale (MHI-5), a short version of the 38-item Mental Health Inventory (Stewart, Hays, and Ware 1988). This scale assesses mental health on four dimensions: anxiety, depression, loss of behavioral or emotional control, and psychological well-being. The five questions ask how often respondents experienced the following mental states during the month before interview: nervous, "calm and peaceful," "downhearted and blue," happy, and "so down in the dumps that nothing could cheer you up." Respondents are considered to have poor mental health if they fall in the lowest quintile for a national sample (Ehrle and Moore 1999).

Respondents' assessments of their self-efficacy, using the New General Self Efficacy Scale, and family support, using the Social Support Survey Family Support Scale, are also included, as well as a dichotomous measure of whether the respondent completed high school or received a general equivalency diploma (GED) or whether he or she lacks a high school di-

ploma or equivalent credential. Respondents who are of working age (18–62) and nondisabled and who report currently working in either full-time or part-time positions are counted as employed, while the remainder of working-age nondisabled adults are characterized in the analysis as not working. Household income is also incorporated into the cluster analysis, defined in categories (<$5,000, $5,000–$9,999, $10,000–$14,999, . . . , $40,000 or more), as is whether the respondent reports that someone in the household receives Supplemental Security Income (SSI).

Two final dichotomous measures relate to contact with the justice system. Respondents were asked to report whether anyone in the household had ever been convicted of a criminal offense and whether anyone in respondent's family or household is currently serving or has ever served more than a year of time in a state or federal prison. The strength of the cluster-analysis approach lies in its ability to synthesize large amounts of complex information into discrete and understandable groups. As with any classification technique, there are limitations. For example, the identified clusters may oversimplify important differences between residents, and cluster analysis is sensitive to the variables that are included. For this reason, highly correlated variables are not included, as they can skew results. To ensure the robustness of the findings, the authors ran the clustering technique through several iterations, replacing, removing, or adding other variables. These analyses consistently arrived at the three groups of residents described here, although there were minor variations. In addition, the research staff vetted the clusters with service providers in the demonstration to ensure they have face validity and practical application.

There are several additional measures used in this article to help understand, but not define, the clusters. A dichotomous measure defines the share of respondents who require ongoing care ("Do you have any illness or recurring health condition that requires regular, ongoing care?"). Severe difficulty with physical mobility is defined by asking respondents six questions using a five-point scale: their difficulty in walking a quarter of a mile; walking up 10 steps without resting; standing on their feet for about 2 hours; sitting for about 2 hours; stooping, bending, or kneeling; and reaching over their head. Response options were not at all difficult (coded 1), only a little difficult (coded 2), somewhat difficult (coded 3), very difficult (coded 4), and cannot do this at all (coded 5). Respondents who averaged, across the six questions, above a 4.0 were classified as having severe difficulty with physical mobility.

For those not working or disabled, but of working age, respondents were asked to report on the number of years since last employed full- or part-time. A measure of safety is also used. Residents answered the question, "How safe do you feel or would you feel being out alone in the parking lots, the lawns, the street, or sidewalks right outside your building at night? Do you feel . . . ?" with one of the following responses: feel very safe, somewhat safe, somewhat unsafe, or very unsafe.

Respondents also report, by name and age, the presence of children in the household, which the analysis codes as a dichotomous measure of children present or absent. Respondents with children report on whether the child is "usually in a good mood," using one of the following five response categories: not at all like child, a little like child, somewhat like child, a lot like child, or completely like child. Child behavior is assessed by asking about six problem behaviors, drawn from the Behavior Problem Index (Peterson and Zill 1986). The questions ask whether the child has trouble getting along with teachers, is disobedient at school, is disobedient at home, hangs around with kids who get in trouble, bullies or is cruel or mean to others, and is restless or overly active, cannot sit still. Respondents report whether this is often, sometimes, or never true, which this analysis uses to create a dichotomous measure (where sometimes and often count as a problem behavior, and never does not). The number of problem behaviors (0–6) are then calculated for each child.

Results

This study presents a three-cluster solution that identifies three groups of residents with distinct sets of challenges. Table A1 demonstrates the explained variants obtained for analyses allowing different numbers of clusters. To facilitate discussion, the three are described as "Striving," "Severely Distressed," and "High Risk." The analysis suggests that Striving residents are the least vulnerable of the three groups, and residents in this group compose 40 percent of the sample. As results in table 1 suggest, Strivers are generally connected to the labor market, and most indicate that they have a high school diploma or a GED. They are younger, on average, than residents in the other groups; additionally, 61 percent report that a child lives in their home, and 78 percent live in female-headed homes. The most striking difference between Striving residents and those in the other groups is that, across several measures, Strivers are estimated to have statistically significantly better mental and physical health.

In contrast to the Striving group, Severely Distressed residents (20 percent of all residents) can be characterized as extremely troubled. They are the oldest group and are the least likely to have children. However, a quarter of Severely Distressed residents report that they care for children, often their grandchildren.[5] An extremely high percentage of Severely Distressed residents (91 percent in 2007, 80 percent in 2009) report fair or poor health. Rates of reported depression and anxiety are strikingly high, as are the rates of illnesses requiring ongoing care (e.g., cardiovascular disease, asthma, arthritis, diabetes, and severe physical mobility impairments). Many of these

5. So-called grandfamilies are nontraditional households, such as those composed of custodial grandparents or persons caring for related foster children. This phenomenon is documented in other public-housing environments as well (Smith and Ferryman 2006).

Table 1

CHARACTERISTICS OF CHICAGO FAMILY CASE MANAGEMENT DEMONSTRATION PARTICIPANTS BY GROUP, 2007

	Striving	High Risk	Severely Distressed
n	114	117	56
Age (years)*	44	48	59
% with GED or high school degree*	80	50	45
% with child in household*	61	64	25
% female head of household*	78	95	68
Tenure in CHA (years)	27	25	30

NOTE.—GED = general equivalency diploma; CHA = Chicago Housing Authority.
* Groups are statistically significantly different at the 5% level in 2007.

residents report receiving SSI, but less than half have a high school diploma or GED, and most report that they have not worked in over a decade. The results suggest that substance use is a struggle for many (19 percent report using illegal drugs other than marijuana in the past year). They also suggest that economic self-sufficiency is an unattainable goal for these residents; in addition to their fragile health status, most seem truly disconnected from the labor market and the world outside public housing. Their profile is similar to that of seniors in the homelessness system (Culhane and Metraux 2008; Northwest Institute for Children and Families 2008). Indeed, some residents may have experienced homelessness for a period. The key difference between these residents and the homeless is that Severely Distressed participants rely on public housing as housing of last resort.

Residents in the High Risk group share characteristics with counterparts in both the Striving and Severely Distressed groups. Like residents in the Striving group, High Risk residents generally are younger than members of the Severely Distressed group, and 64 percent report that a child lives in their household. Although not as frail as the Severely Distressed, High Risk residents report serious physical and mental health challenges. Rates of reported obesity, fair or poor health, illness requiring ongoing care, depression, and anxiety are high. The employment levels are reportedly low among the High Risk residents; most in the High Risk group report that they receive some form of public assistance (SSI, food stamps, and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families [TANF]). The High Risk group is 95 percent female-headed families. The results suggest that the High Risk families are especially vulnerable and at risk of becoming as troubled as families in the Severely Distressed group. With the right support, they might be able to make gains. Forty percent of all residents in the sample fall into the High Risk group.

Physical and Mental Health

The prevalence of serious health problems among residents in the demonstration sample is striking. Although the sample as a whole reports poor

health, the results suggest that the health of the three groups varies substantially. By far, Severely Distressed respondents are estimated to have the worst health: a shocking 91 percent of residents in this category rate their health as fair or poor in the 2007 baseline interview. By nearly every measure, respondents in the Severely Distressed group are estimated to be in worse health than other respondents. In the 2007 interview, approximately three out of four report an illness requiring ongoing care; a third say that they have been diagnosed with asthma, and more than two-thirds report that they received a diagnosis of hypertension. Almost half of Severely Distressed respondents (48 percent) have a baseline body mass index that identifies them as obese (index score of 30 or greater), and another 27 percent are identified as overweight. Given their poor health overall, it is not surprising that many in this group (58 percent) report severe difficulty with physical mobility.

Respondents in the High Risk group are estimated to be nearly as badly off as, and seem in many ways to be a younger version of, the residents in the Severely Distressed group. In both the baseline (2007) and follow-up (2009) interviews, over half rate their health as fair or poor, and about the same proportion report having an illness that requires ongoing care. Additionally, at baseline, 27 percent say that they have been diagnosed with asthma, and 53 percent report that they received a formal diagnosis of hypertension; the estimated prevalence of these conditions is roughly the same at the 2007 baseline interview as at the 2009 follow-up. Estimates of body mass index indicate that residents in the High Risk group have the highest baseline rates of obesity: 65 percent of High Risk residents are identified as obese in the 2007 interview, and another 17 percent are identified as overweight. Although they are on average 11 years younger than counterparts in the Severely Distressed group, High Risk respondents report severe difficulty with physical mobility at high rates (39 percent) in the 2007 interview.

Respondents in the Striving group are in far better health than those assigned to the Severely Distressed and High Risk categories. A comparatively low 32 percent of Strivers rate their health as fair or poor in the 2007 baseline interview, and 21 percent report in that interview that they have an illness requiring ongoing care. Less than 20 percent report that they have been diagnosed with asthma, and less than one-third report a diagnosis of hypertension. Those in the Striving cluster also are estimated to be much less likely than other respondents to have a body mass index that identifies them as obese: 38 percent of Strivers are identified as obese in the 2007 interview, and 39 percent are identified as such in the 2009 follow-up. The obesity rate among Striving respondents is similar to the national average for African American women and roughly 40 percent lower than for the High Risk group (Manjarrez, Popkin, and Guernsey 2007). And, because Strivers are in better overall health than their High Risk counterparts, it is not surprising that just 5 percent of Striving respondents report severe difficulty with physical mobility.

Underscoring the links between safety and well-being, the rates at which Severely Distressed residents report fear of crime are much higher than those reported by other residents. By nearly three times the rate reported in 2007 among those in the Striving group, residents in the Severely Distressed group, the most troubled of the three, report at baseline that they feel very unsafe (when alone outside their apartment building at night).

The 2007 baseline survey includes measures of depression and anxiety. Analyses examine differences in reports of these conditions across the three clusters. As results in table 2 suggest, the Severely Distressed cluster is by far the most severely affected; baseline results indicate that approximately one-third of these respondents receive scores indicating depression, and 68 percent are estimated to suffer from anxiety in that interview. These results are supported by data from interviews with case managers, who report several instances of uncontrolled schizophrenia among residents in their caseload. They also report that many (perhaps most) residents in the two housing developments experience trauma and symptoms of posttraumatic stress disorder.

In estimates from the 2007 interview data, just over 19 percent of High Risk respondents are judged to have depression, and 31 percent report anxiety; it is important to remember that these percentages are far higher than those for the general population. In contrast, 5 percent of Striving respondents receive scores that identify them as depressed at the 2007 interview, and 15 percent report anxiety in that survey (see table 2).

Employment and Income

Many of the residents in the two developments face numerous, complex challenges that impede their ability to move toward self-sufficiency and remain stably employed. These residents have weak (or nonexistent) employment histories, limited work skills, and very low literacy levels (Parilla and Theodos 2010). Previous studies find that limited physical mobility and depression are leading barriers to work for public-housing families (e.g., Levy and Woolley 2007), so the current sample's low rates of employment are not surprising. The findings highlight the importance of increasing employment and self-sufficiency as well as the enormous challenge of doing so. They also raise questions about whether the CHA should develop different strategies for residents in poor health.

The overall employment situation for these residents is strikingly poor, and the circumstances of the three groups are again estimated to be highly divergent. The results suggest that Severely Distressed residents are the worst off; only 36 percent of working-age nondisabled adults are employed in 2007. In addition to poor mental and physical health, this group is estimated to face serious employment barriers, and these barriers are associated

Table 2

Characteristics of Chicago Family Case Management Demonstration Participants by Group, 2007 and 2009

	Striving (n = 114)		High Risk (n = 117)		Severely Distressed (n = 56)	
	2007	2009	2007	2009	2007	2009
Physical health:						
Obese[a]	38	39	65	62	48	48
Fair or poor health[a]	32	25	58	55	91	80
Illness requiring ongoing care[a]	21	26	50	58	73	71
Severe difficulty with physical mobility[a]	5	9	39	46	58	59
Current smoker	55	53	47	48	55	56
Regular drinker	20	21	16	18	27	22
Mental health:						
Depressed[a]	5	5	19	12*	32	27
Anxious[a]	15	13	31	24	68	41*
Feel very unsafe[b]	9	8	21	12*	25	16
Self-efficacy[a]	3.9	3.7	3.1	3.2	3.8	3.8
Family support scale	3.6	3.5	2.8	3.0	3.4	3.2
Employment and earnings:						
Employed[a,c]	70	68	34	46*	36	43
Earning under $10,000 annually[a]	56	47*	81	67*	72	61
Median years since last employment[a,c,d]	1	1	3	4	11	11
Public assistance:						
Receiving SSI[a]	6	10	51	51	46	64*
Receiving food stamps[a]	69	60	81	77	62	64
Receiving TANF[b]	10	9	21	11*	5	9
Threat of eviction	16	14	16	12	12	11
Drug use:						
Regular marijuana users	8	7	5	7	13	10
Used illegal drugs[a]	5	5	0	2	19	21
Criminal justice contact:						
Anyone in household convicted of criminal offense	9	10	8	7	14	16
Anyone in household serving or served more than a year in prison	11	14	14	14	13	12
Children:[e]						
2+ problem behaviors[f]	42	34	55	59		
Suspended from school[b]	33	24	47	30*		
Fair or poor health	12	16	21	23		

Note.—SSI = Supplemental Security Income program benefits; TANF = Temporary Assistance for Needy Families program benefits. Results are presented as percentages.

[a] Groups are statistically significantly different at the 5% level in 2007 and 2009.

[b] Groups are statistically significantly different at the 5% level in 2007 only.

[c] Measure calculated only for those who are working-age nondisabled.

[d] Measure calculated only for those who are working age and not currently working.

[e] Results for Severely Distressed are restricted due to limited sample size for this group and item.

[f] Groups are statistically significantly different in 2009 only.

* Statistically significant change within the group between 2007 and 2009.

with low literacy and numeracy levels (Parilla and Theodos 2010). As noted above, over half of Severely Distressed respondents report that they did not graduate from high school or get a GED, and case managers report that many read below the fifth-grade level. In the 2007 baseline interview, Severely Distressed respondents report extremely low incomes (only 28 percent report earning above $10,000 per year) and high rates of public assistance receipt: 62 percent report receiving food stamps, 46 percent report receiving SSI for themselves or someone in their household, and 5 percent report receipt of TANF.

Many High Risk residents are on the margins of the labor force. Just 34 percent of working-age nondisabled adults report working in 2007, but the results suggest that the duration of unemployment for out-of-work residents in the High Risk group is not as great as that for their Severely Distressed counterparts; among working-age nondisabled and not-working High Risk respondents, the median reported length of time out of the labor force is 3 years, while for similar Severely Distressed residents it is 11 years. In addition, 64 percent of High Risk respondents report having children in their household. These factors suggest that the demonstration's work-support transitional jobs program might enable the High Risk group to transition into (or maintain) stable employment. Across both interview waves, the results indicate that the High Risk group has slightly more education and slightly lower incomes than do Severely Distressed residents. The percentage of High Risk respondents who say they receive public assistance is higher than that for the two other groups: in the 2007 baseline, 81 percent report receiving food stamps, 21 percent report receiving TANF, and 51 percent report receiving SSI.

Although the incomes of Striving residents are still low (56 percent report earning under $10,000 a year), they more closely resemble other low-income families with housing vouchers in 2007 than do the Severely Distressed and High Risk groups (Lubell, Shroder, and Steffen 2003). Although 70 percent of working-age nondisabled Striving residents report working in the 2007 interview, they indicate that they generally worked for low pay, and the reported median hourly wage is $10.00; 80 percent of Strivers say that they graduated high school or earned a GED. The observed levels of employment and high school graduation suggest that this group also could benefit from increased training and skill-building opportunities. Many Striving residents in the 2007 interviews report receiving food stamps (69 percent), but very few report receiving SSI (6 percent) or TANF (10 percent).

Children

Like the adults in the sample, the children are estimated to vary in their levels of distress at the 2007 interview. Because few Severely Distressed households include children, this analysis only considers children in High

Risk and Striving families. The analysis focuses on school-age children (i.e., those over age 6). Parents are asked to describe the behavior and health of their children. As can be expected, children fare better on the measured outcomes if their parents are higher functioning, that is, if they are more likely to work and to have a high school education and less likely to experience mental and physical health problems (Getsinger and Popkin 2010). Meanwhile, the children living in distressed households—children whose parents were substance abusers, suffering from serious mental and physical health challenges, and not connected to the labor market—are suffering the most (Getsinger and Popkin 2010).

The analyses identify health disparities between children in Striving and High Risk families. Of respondents in the Striving group, 88 percent report at the 2007 baseline that their children's health is either excellent or very good, and such health is reported for 79 percent of the children in High Risk households. There also appear to be differences in mental health: 72 percent of Striving parents say that their children are usually in a good mood, but this is reported by only 47 percent of High Risk households with children. These percentages may explain some observed differences in behavior. Parents report that children in Striver homes were less likely to exhibit two or more problem behaviors than are children in High Risk households (42 vs. 55 percent). Almost half (47 percent) of High Risk heads of household report in the 2007 interview that their children received a suspension from school at some point in their educational career, and 33 percent of Striver respondents report this.

Conditions at Follow-Up

The results from the 2009 follow-up survey largely confirm 2007 baseline estimates that indicate the stark differences in physical and mental health, employment, earnings, and child health and behavioral conditions among the three groups. The Severely Distressed group's physical health remains very poor, and the percentage of respondents reporting fair or poor health is statistically unchanged from 2007 to 2009. The other two groups are better off than the Severely Distressed, and their reported health status also remains unchanged from 2007 to 2009. Results from the follow-up survey suggest that demonstration participants' physical health does not deteriorate over time. This may suggest that services have a stabilizing effect (Popkin and Getsinger 2010).

The three groups of residents are estimated to differ at follow-up in their levels of anxiety and depression. Although anxiety among the Severely Distressed is estimated to decrease from 68 to 41 percent during the demonstration, these respondents still are more likely to be anxious in 2009 than are their High Risk (24 percent) and Striving (13 percent) counterparts. The results suggest that Severely Distressed residents continue to battle depression, as the rate among them at the 2009 follow-up (27 percent) is

higher than that among Strivers (5 percent) and High Risk respondents (12 percent, a statistically significant decline from 19 percent in 2007; Popkin and Getsinger 2010).

Estimates from the follow-up interviews indicate that the ability to find and maintain employment continues to be one of the most pronounced differences between Strivers and each of the two more vulnerable clusters. Some modest changes are observed for the groups between the survey waves. Employment rates are estimated to remain statistically unchanged among working-age nondisabled Strivers, but a statistically significantly greater share of those Strivers report earning above $10,000 annually in 2009 than do in 2007. By 2009, 46 percent of working-age nondisabled High Risk adults are reportedly employed (up from 34 percent in 2007), and research suggests that the High Risk group benefits most from the transitional jobs services provided under the program (Parilla and Theodos 2010). The follow-up results suggest that Severely Distressed residents are no more likely to be working in 2009 than in 2007, and their earnings remain statistically unchanged between the waves. The Severely Distressed cohort is clearly in such poor health (64 percent report receiving SSI in 2009, an increase of 18 percent from 2007) that self-sufficiency may be an unrealistic prospect.

Similar to the adults in the study, the children represented in the 2009 results continue to vary in their levels of distress. However, the measured child-level outcomes remain unchanged at follow-up; children with higher-functioning parents continue to do better, and those living in the most troubled families struggle the most.

Implications

This study's analyses suggest that it is possible to group subsidized housing residents on the basis of their demographic, educational, employment, health, and substance-use characteristics. Statistically significant differences are estimated among three groups of residents at baseline, and these results are verified with estimates from follow-up interviews. In qualitative interviews, case managers indicate that they find these categorizations to be meaningful. The managers report that they use this typology as a framework for thinking about how and how often to engage their clients.

The authors do not suggest that such an analytic procedure should be the sole means for designing treatment plans. People are dynamic and require different courses of treatment as their circumstances change. But this type of exercise may prove useful as public and private agencies attempt to target services effectively. For example, collecting detailed data on residents and grouping them analytically is time intensive and costly, but such work may support the development of thresholds or bench-

marks on given metrics. Those developments could then be applied through a practical tool for practitioners. Of course, any effort to develop such a typology should draw on a more diverse sample of communities and public-housing developments than is available in the current study.

How might the definitions of the three groups translate into recommended service packages? Each group's course of treatment will differ in the specific type of services provided, the level or intensity of contact, and the duration of the services. To illustrate how this process might work, the following discussion considers each group and its potential service needs.

Service Recommendations for the Striving Group

Clearly, the Striving group is very different from the other two. Strivers have their high school diplomas. They are connected to the labor market, even if they cycle in and out of low-wage jobs. Perhaps the most important characteristic of this group is that they are in relatively good mental and physical health. However, case managers in the demonstration report that Strivers are often the most difficult respondents to engage in intensive services; managers say that Strivers are often uninterested in such services or are simply unavailable during the workday. These residents need fewer services than other residents do, but it is likely that relocating out of distressed public housing will not be sufficient to ensure the long-term stability of most Strivers. Although better off than their counterparts on many indicators, these Striving residents also report very long tenures in public housing. This suggests that they have little experience in dealing with landlords or the stresses of living in the private market. Likewise, other research on HOPE VI relocatees suggests that public-housing residents who move to the private market experience significant hardship, especially difficulty paying utility bills and affording food (Buron, Levy, and Gallagher 2007; Popkin et al. 2009).

Striving families will continue to need light-touch support and to ensure that they are able to maintain their gains. To sustain progress, Striving families might benefit from long-term follow-up, which could take the form of monthly visits from a case manager for the first year after moving out of public housing and quarterly contact for at least 2 additional years.

Families in this group might also benefit from continued access to employment services, including transitional jobs, job-search assistance, sector-based job training, work-related child care support, and continuing technical and professional education. Opportunity Chicago, a unique partnership among the CHA, the City of Chicago, and the Partnership for New Communities, remains a promising template for improving employment outcomes (Parkes et al. 2008).

Programs that teach financial literacy, particularly budgeting and saving, could help Striving families to maintain the gains that enable them to leave public housing. The Opportunity Housing Initiative of Home Forward

(formerly the Housing Authority of Portland) is an innovative model that provides an opportunity for every participant to build an escrow account while receiving financial planning support. Finally, second-mover counseling might help Striving respondents to make subsequent moves into communities that offer greater opportunities for themselves and their children.

Service Recommendations for the Severely Distressed Group

In contrast, Severely Distressed residents have very different service needs. They face stark physical and mental health challenges. Nearly all (80 percent) rate their health as fair or poor in the 2009 follow-up, indicating that they are extremely vulnerable. Further, rates of anxiety and depression are estimated to be four times higher among Severely Distressed residents than among a national sample of African American women (Manjarrez et al. 2007).

The results suggest that economic self-sufficiency is an unattainable goal for these residents. Their health status is fragile, and most indicate that they have not worked in over a decade; they are truly disconnected from the labor market and the world outside public housing. For these extremely vulnerable residents, a better approach than that recommended for Strivers would be to focus on harm reduction. Such an effort could help Severely Distressed residents remain stable and avoid becoming homeless or ending up in nursing homes. It also might prevent their children from ending up in the child welfare system. The authors recommend several appropriate strategies for the Severely Distressed.

First, the authors recommend the adoption of an assisted-living model for Severely Distressed residents. The model would provide sufficient care (meals, housekeeping, activities, health care, case management, grocery store access) to help frail and mentally unstable residents remain in the community. To accommodate the needs of this public-housing population, this service must be available to residents who have serious physical and mental health disabilities.

Second, the authors argue that services to Severely Distressed should include permanent, supportive housing that provides an intensive on-site service package. The package should include parenting support, child care, and after-school services for those who have custody of children or grandchildren.

Service Recommendations for the High Risk Group

High Risk residents share characteristics with both Striving and Severely Distressed residents. Like the Striving group, they generally are younger than their Severely Distressed counterparts and have children in their household. They also are like the Striving group in that the vast majority

of High Risk residents indicate at the 2007 baseline that they do not want to remain in traditional public housing. Although not yet as frail as the Severely Distressed, they already have serious physical and mental health challenges, and rates of poor health, depression, anxiety, and substance use are high.

Notably, the rates of obesity are higher for the High Risk group than for the other two, and obesity places them at risk for other serious health problems like hypertension and diabetes. The multiple challenges identified among High Risk families suggest that they are the group for which intensive case-management models are most likely to pay off. Such efforts might enable these residents to avoid the homelessness, child welfare, and criminal justice systems. Case management also may provide High Risk residents with stable environments for their children, assist them in achieving their housing goals (vouchers or mixed-income developments), and help them to move toward self-sufficiency.

High Risk families need the types of services that the demonstration provided, and the authors recommend three service options in particular. First, the authors recommend integrated supportive housing for these families. In this model, small numbers of permanent family-supportive housing units are incorporated into mixed-income developments. Case management and services are provided on-site.

Second, the authors recommend the use of vouchers with wraparound services. In such a package, case managers go into the community to provide voucher-holders with the same package of services delivered in permanent family-supportive housing.

Third, the authors argue that High Risk residents would benefit from services that incorporate best practices like the incentives model from Project Match's Pathways to Rewards program in Chicago (Herr and Wagner 2009). That model helps families to move toward self-sufficiency by providing rewards for achievements like paying rent on time, getting their children to school, applying for a job, and volunteering.

Conclusion

Many policy makers and scholars regard HOPE VI as one of the nation's most successful urban redevelopment programs (Cisneros 2009; Katz 2009). Despite its very real accomplishments, the HOPE VI program's record is mixed concerning its ability to meet the needs of the original residents who endured the worst consequences of public housing's failures. Although many obtained vouchers and relocated to better housing in safer neighborhoods or to the new developments, others simply relocated to other traditional public-housing sites. A disproportionate share of the residents who ended up in these developments are the most vulnerable. They are those most damaged by the distressed environment and least able to cope with the challenges of relocation.

With its new initiative, Choice Neighborhoods, the Obama administration has the opportunity to build on the experiences of nearly 2 decades of experience with HOPE VI. Choice Neighborhoods grants are designed to redevelop not just distressed public-housing developments but also the neighborhoods surrounding them. The secretary of HUD, Shaun Donovan, recently stated, "There is no excuse, any longer, if there ever was, to fail to house and support every family now living in a distressed or assisted housing project" (Donovan 2009). If HUD and its partners incorporate intensive case management and permanent, supportive housing for the most vulnerable into the Choice Neighborhoods initiative, or for that matter, any other comprehensive redevelopment effort, this would help ensure that these initiatives truly meet the needs of these public-housing families. However, even a comprehensive initiative like Choice Neighborhoods will not be able to support intensive services for all the public-housing residents in the target areas, let alone those living in the surrounding community. The number of communities that receive Choice Neighborhoods funding will also be relatively limited; subsidized-housing tenants in cities beyond these redevelopment efforts require services as well.

Aging and vulnerable populations are likely to grow. Currently, there are 4.9 million renters age 65 and older; that number is expected to grow by about 2 million over the next decade (Joint Center for Housing Studies 2011). As the population continues to age, the Severely Distressed group will also grow. The needs of vulnerable populations may be exacerbated by the fallout from the Great Recession: continued high unemployment, decreased savings, and the mental health strains that accompany both. Many High Risk households will experience the double hit of aging and diminished economic prospects. All of these trends will likely occur during a period of fiscal austerity, and already scarce resources for supportive services may continue to diminish.

In short, it is time to rethink the assessment and delivery of services to vulnerable subsidized housing residents in order to deploy scarce resources as effectively as possible. This article hypothesizes that empirical analysis could create meaningful groups of residents in an effort to inform the targeting of services to residents. Identifying such groups could facilitate assessments of who needs intensive services and who could benefit from a light-touch approach. The typology proposed in this study suggests a strategy for targeting services to make their provision more effective and efficient in a context of limited resources.

Given the lack of research that rigorously tests the long-term efficacy of different assessment tools and approaches, practitioners have little other than their intuitions to guide them. The public sector, philanthropic community, service providers, and researchers must continue to develop and critically test assessment and analysis tools. These tools should incorporate, to the extent they are available, the existing assessments preliminarily vetted by research.

This process should be more coordinated than it has been to date across different service silos, many of which aid similar clients facing similar issues. Resulting evidence-based assessment tools could then be adapted for a range of service providers working with vulnerable families. These efforts will be intensive, requiring a new commitment to integrating administrative data across different social service systems while ensuring the quality and reliability of efforts to track residents.

In addition to developing better assessment tools, research must continue to provide sufficient and high-quality services in ways that enable needy families to access them and that have a positive effect. In addition, service providers must have access to the right services for families at their time of need. Absent this, services and housing subsidies will continue to be allocated to far fewer families than need or qualify for them.

Appendix

Table A1

SUMMARY CLUSTER STATISTICS FOR CHICAGO FAMILY CASE MANAGEMENT DEMONSTRATION PARTICIPANTS

Cluster Solution	Pseudo *F*-Statistic	Expected R^2
2	32.01	.04139
3	23.76	.07372
4	25.74	.10106
5	20.86	.12481
6	19.21	.14588
7	21.68	.16487
8	19.30	.18219

Note

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Book Reviews

After-School Centers and Youth Development: Case Studies of Success and Failure. By Barton J. Hirsch, Nancy L. Deutsch, and David L. DuBois. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011. Pp. 368. $90.00 (cloth); $32.99 (paper).

The laws of entropy apply to youth-serving organizations as they do to all institutions. Disorder is always embryonic in human systems—in the inevitable misunderstandings, oversights, conflicting viewpoints, and power dynamics. In some organizations, these seeds of disorder develop into full-blown dysfunction; in others, not. Parents choosing an after-school center for their children often cannot see the difference. The same can be true for funders and policy makers, but much is at stake.

Over the past 20 years the youth development field has come to appreciate how big differences can be in the quality of youth programs, particularly in the developmental experiences they provide for youth.[1] In fact, it is now known that some programs can have long-term negative effects on young people (Kenneth A. Dodge, Thomas J. Dishion, and Jennifer E. Lansford, eds., *Deviant Peer Influences in Programs for Youth: Problems and Solutions* [New York: Guilford, 2006], 3–13). This book, the winner of the Society for Research on Adolescence's 2012 Social Policy Publication Award for Best Authored Book, does a superb job of showing what these differences look like from the inside out.

After-School Centers and Youth Development provides in-depth case studies of three youth centers: one is an example of "organizational dysfunction" (129), a second has "pockets of excellence" (33), and a third is a "jewel in the crown" (217). All three are Boys and Girls Clubs in the same large city. All serve school-aged youth from low-income families. All have structured activities as well as spaces for youth to hang out (game rooms and gyms). Yet, there are vast differences in organizational effectiveness. Barton Hirsch, Nancy Deutsch, and David DuBois surveyed and interviewed administrators, staff, and youth; they also conducted social-network mapping and spent thousands of hours conducting observations. What emerges is a picture of how center quality emanates from all levels of an organization: from layered processes of disorder or from "synergy" (16).

North River Center is a dramatic example of how dysfunction can reverberate through all levels of an organization, squelching developmental opportunities for

1. Joseph A. Durlak, Roger P. Weissberg, and Molly Pachan, "A Meta-Analysis of After-School Programs That Seek to Promote Personal and Social Skills in Children and Adolescents," *American Journal of Community Psychology* 45, nos. 3–4 (2010): 294–309; Dale Blyth, "The Future of Youth Development: Multiple Wisdoms, Alternate Pathways and Aligned Accountability," *Journal of Youth Development* 6, no. 3 (2011): 167–82.

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youth. The director of North River, Mr. Jones (a pseudonym), reprimands employees in front of youth and brushes off those who want to start new activities. Frontline staff clash with each other (remarkably, the researchers observed collaboration between staff on only four occasions during their year of observation). Conflicts, "spreading like wildfire" throughout the organization, affect staff interactions with youth (147). Operating in an unpredictable and punitive environment, staff reportedly feel they have to keep children on a short leash. Frustrations fester. Opportunities for meaningful youth-adult relationships are often thwarted.

Hirsch and colleagues follow the experiences of a North River youth, Tweetie (youth picked their own pseudonyms), who started a cheerleading squad. But seeing its success, Mr. Jones assigns a staff member to run it. The staff member refuses to use any of the routines that Tweetie and the team developed (move over Susan Sylvester). Coming from Mr. Jones on down, the dictatorial and inconsistent messages undercut Tweetie's initiative, and it is a pattern replayed on a daily basis for youth at North River. The entire basketball team boycotted the center for several weeks after Mr. Jones called them losers and threatened to kick several of them off the game bus.

In contrast, West River Center serves as the "jewel" (217). At this club, there is synergy among management, staff, and youth. The director communicates strong and consistent expectations that staff support and contribute to the youth's positive development. Indeed, West River is the only one of the three centers that fires staff and even volunteers who do not perform up to par. Staff are encouraged to develop new activities, especially those that allow youth to exercise agency. As a result, West River has many more structured activities than North River, and the researchers observe that these activities provide much richer opportunities for youth to form close mentoring relationships with individual staff.

For example, a male youth, Midnight, forms this kind of close mentoring bond with a staff member, Victoria, through a dance group and other activities she organizes. Victoria structures these activities so that participants have input in multiple ways. This structure "offered Midnight a steady diet of opportunities for exercising leadership and responsibility" (244). The trust that Midnight develops through these opportunities also allows Victoria to call him out for disrespectful behavior and to provide coaching that helps him learn to work effectively with younger children.

Through numerous similar illustrations, Hirsch and associates show how the greater effectiveness of West River is attributable to the collective synergy of the staff. The researchers observe one-tenth the number of conflicts among West River staff as among counterparts at North River. Whereas youth at North River are often stymied by conflicting messages from adults who do not communicate with each other, the staff at West River share a working philosophy that emphasizes staff collaboration; they also share a common goal of facilitating each youth's development. Although the authors identify aspects of West River's functioning that could be more intentional, the case provides a vivid illustration of an organization engaged in providing synergistic developmental opportunities for youth.

The authors' take-home message is that "the whole is greater than the sum of the parts" (283). Researchers love to slice and dice youth development into pieces, and they most often focus on what happens between staff and youth. But high quality is not produced by just one element or at one level of analysis; it involves synergies across and between. The combination of elements and processes creates a catalyst for youth's positive development.

Of course case studies of three programs take the reader only so far. It is certainly possible that there are multiple forms of high-quality programs (i.e., different kinds of synergies) and also multiple ways in which programs can be dysfunctional. Culture may enter into these differences, as may the population of youth served.

Studies with large numbers of programs are needed in order to get a handle on these issues. Such studies also are needed to evaluate cause-and-effect relationships. But it should be recognized that research on youth development organizations is in an infancy stage, and this book does much to open the reader's eyes. The multilevel theoretical framework introduced by the authors provides an invaluable lens for future research, program evaluation, and practitioner training.

We recommend *After-School Centers and Youth Development* as valuable reading for anyone concerned with youth development and youth programs. The book is at once soundly grounded in research, while also providing vivid stories that illustrate the enormous range of real-life dynamics in youth organizations. For policy makers and researchers, it is a wake-up call for the importance of a holistic perspective. For undergraduate and graduate students, the book can serve as an effective text that will spark critical conversations tied to theory, management, and child development. For practitioners, the final chapter provides reasonable recommendations on ways of instituting strategies to create a synergistic organization that reverberates high quality and addresses disorder on all levels.

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Immigrants Raising Citizens: Undocumented Parents and Their Young Children. By Hirokazu Yoshikawa. New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 2011. Pp. 208. $29.95 (cloth); $24.95 (paper).

Most Americans agree, albeit with widely diverging opinions, that the US immigration system is broken and in need of repair. Nonetheless, congressional inaction over the past few years has given way to de facto enforcement policies and a barrage of state-level measures that only draw more attention to the problem. Although much of the political debate focuses on whether to provide legalization to the more than 11.1 million undocumented immigrants, the plight of their American-born children receives much less consideration. To be sure, those born in the United States experience the benefits of citizenship. They are integrated into American public schools and grow up as hyphenated Americans, but they do face other disadvantages.

Hirokazu Yoshikawa's book, *Immigrants Raising Citizens*, is a timely and important contribution to these debates as well as to the burgeoning scholarship aimed at understanding the ways in which undocumented status shapes day-to-day life. There are currently 4 million American-born children with at least one undocumented parent. As Yoshikawa's book powerfully shows, these young citizens face unique challenges because of their parents' immigration status. The work is based on an impressive 3-year study of undocumented parents. It captures data from a birth cohort of 380 infants in African American, Chinese, Dominican, and Mexican families that it follows for 3 years after the infants' births.

Immigrants Raising Citizens makes the case that immigration status matters. Moving beyond the often cited disadvantages of poverty and low parental education, Yoshikawa demonstrates that current policies restricting the participation of undocumented immigrants undermine the well-being of their children. Specifically, he argues that parents' immigration status impairs their children's cognitive development by steering parents away from social programs, limiting

their social networks, and funneling them into low-wage jobs with poor working conditions.

Yoshikawa argues that fear of authorities causes undocumented parents to forgo critical learning opportunities for which their children are eligible. In particular, parents in the study are found to shy away from resources for their children if such services require several forms of identification, proof of employment, or proof of earnings. Undocumented parents in his study are estimated to receive child-care subsidies and enroll their children in child-care programs at lower rates than do parents in the general population. This hampers children's early language development as well as their motor and perceptual skills.

He also finds that the undocumented parents' work life affects their children's life chances. The types of jobs available to undocumented immigrants typically draw those with low skill levels. Such jobs often involve long hours, tedious and laborious tasks, and very meager wages. As such, they provide limited opportunities for self-direction and autonomy. Taken together, the psychological distress of backbreaking and unfulfilling work, long hours, and prolonged economic hardship are found to negatively affect parents' interaction with their children.

One of the strengths of *Immigrants Raising Citizens* is Yoshikawa's multimethod research design. Data from parent surveys and child assessments are supplemented by data from interviews and participant observations. The interviews and observations capture snapshots of 23 families at 14, 24, and 36 months after the birth of the focal child. In addition, the study's comparative approach enables Yoshikawa to uncover key differences across immigration status and national origin. For example, he finds that the early cognitive skills (e.g., emerging vocabulary, visual perception, and motor skills) of young children with undocumented parents are lower than those of young children with documented parents (an important empirical finding). However, it is surprising that he finds no difference between the groups in such behavioral outcomes as antisocial or cooperative behaviors. His comparisons across ethnic groups identify some key differences in child-rearing strategies. For example, facing long work hours and large debts to smugglers, Chinese parents choose to send their American-born infants back to China to be raised by grandparents.

Immigrants Raising Citizens is a must-read for scholars, policy makers, and community leaders. It provides an engaging account of the hidden, day-to-day struggles of a population that is significant in size and faces great vulnerability. As such, the book makes an important data-driven contribution to scholarship on immigrant incorporation and to the political debates over immigration policy. Although much of the current research on immigrant adaptation focuses on intergenerational mobility, Yoshikawa's findings elucidate the here-and-now experiences of undocumented immigrants and their children. The findings reveal that the current restrictions imposed on undocumented migrants by immigration law have potentially lifelong consequences for their children. Given the size of this population, the problem is exceptionally broad in scope. It has far-reaching implications for legalization programs, labor standards, and community-level efforts. Moreover, as Yoshikawa stresses, increasing levels of integration for parents and children yields advantages that should make expanding levels of access an issue of national importance.

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The Ghetto: Contemporary Global Issues and Controversies. Edited by Ray Hutchison and Bruce D. Haynes. Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 2011. Pp. 384. $43.00 (paper).

In reading the title of this book, I was reminded of Michael Katz's *Why Don't American Cities Burn?* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011). Both titles appear to be quite dated. The ghetto and the potential for violence and destruction in US cities are hardly the concerns that they were in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Neither popular nor scholarly discourse seems to give them the prominence they once enjoyed. In fact, the titles suggest that these books are about bygone discussions. And yet, Ray Hutchison and Bruce Haynes remind the reader that even though the image of the ghetto does not resonate as it once did, the conditions it was intended to capture still linger.

The editors begin their introductory chapter by remarking on the conceptual salience of the term "ghetto" within urban studies and reviewing the historical development of the concept. They point out, as many have previously, that the term comes from sixteenth-century Venice, where it served as a label for the areas in which Jews were confined. Since then, the use of the term has been a story of progressive misuse, and its applications extended over conditions that diverge greatly from those that existed at its origins. This misapplication includes the so-called classic African American ghettos of Harlem and the South Bronx in New York City as well as the South Side in Chicago. The term is often conflated with a racialized space or a place of concentrated poverty; doing so, Hutchison and Haynes suggest, forestalls valid and reliable analysis. For them, the ghetto is a means of social control, "an administrative strategy of state-imposed racialization" (xv) that involves debasement and social stratification. The goal of this edited collection is to dispel obfuscation by moving toward a sharper understanding of "marginalized urban spaces and peoples around the globe" (xxvii). The subtext is a lament about the sorry state of urban theory.

Loïc Wacquant is a highly disciplined theorist, and his contribution appropriately establishes the ground rules for reading all of the chapters that follow. Carefully specifying a thick and relational conception of the ghetto, he focuses on the geographical isolation and economic exploitation of a dishonored category of people. Central to these processes is an extant power asymmetry sharp enough to leave one group wholly vulnerable to and under the control of another. At the same time, Wacquant emphasizes the Janus-faced quality of the ghetto: it stigmatizes but encourages collective pride, marginalizes and yet nurtures internal institutions, exploits while strengthening capabilities. Moreover, he argues for disentangling concentrated poverty, segregation, ethnic clustering, and social control rather than conflating them as, he notes, occurs with most American writing on slums. Wacquant wants scholars to move away from the perspective that ghettos are sites of deprivation, a perspective whose origins lie in the Chicago school of urban sociology and whose claims Ray Hutchison subjects to empirical assessment.

Michael Agier's chapter builds on Wacquant's theoretical line of inquiry in its discussion of refugee camps, prisons, and places for asylum-seekers. He too notes the relational quality of the term "ghetto" and the inherent power asymmetry that becomes manifest in spatial confinement. Agier further emphasizes the extraterritoriality of these places; that is, he notes the way they exist both within states but also outside of them, an observation that returns us to the Jewish ghettos of sixteenth-century Venice. The people in these places are "cast out inside" (279).

Two other theoretical chapters also stand out in this book. They are quite different. One is by Peter Marcuse. Known for the distinction he draws among ghettos, citadels, and enclaves, in this chapter Marcuse further typologizes the ghetto

into four categories: hard, weak, dispersed, and abandoned. (Three chapters expand the typological approach internationally: one by Alan Gilbert and another by Brasilmar Ferreira Nunes and Leticia Veloso focus on the contrast between US ghettos and Latin American favelas; the third, by Ernesto Castaneda, brings French *banlieues* into the discussion.) Marcuse proposes that ghettos in the United States are being diluted by gentrification and that their social control function as regards African Americans is becoming despatialized, for example, via prisons. His position on the first point is much influenced by the gentrification of Harlem, a neighborhood that has iconic status in the ghetto literature.

Abdou Maliq Simone conceptualizes such spaces quite differently. In contrast to Marcuse's analytical approach, Simone encourages the reader to engage the people on the ground and to see their marginality from their perspective. He is less interested in how one might divide up places, allocating some to ghettos and others to affluent gated communities, then with how people manage to survive in circumstances that require a constant balancing and rebalancing of relationships. Drawing on his ethnographic studies of cities in sub-Saharan Africa, he rejects the characterization of slum inhabitants as despondent, lacking resources (particularly of the social kind), and bereft of aspirations. Instead, he reveals individuals who are quite adept at moving through an uncertain world by creatively assembling people and resources. His positive spin reveals the vibrancy and opportunities of places that might otherwise be defamed as slums.

This is not to dismiss the very significant and detrimental ways in which being associated with the ghetto affects those associated with it. Elijah Anderson writes about the "iconic ghetto" that shapes the lives of African Americans in the United States, whether they came from or live in ghettos or are even poor. Middle-class African Americans cannot avoid the ghetto stereotypes and ghetto prejudices in their daily lives even when engaged in such mundane activities as being seated at a restaurant or hailing a cab. The term "ghetto" adheres to race, Anderson suggests, even more strongly than to place.

As Sharon Zukin notes for Harlem, a place can lose its ghetto reputation. Harlem has been gentrifying since the late 1990s. Culturally repositioned, it is now much more middle class and more racially mixed than it was in the 1960s and 1970s, when it purportedly epitomized the American ghetto. Yet, even then, the ghetto was hardly the ghetto seen on national television and read about in popular magazines. Bruce Haynes tells of growing up there in a middle-class family among other middle-class families, and he reminds the reader that this racialized ghetto, since its inception in the early twentieth century, was always more socially and economically diverse than popularly acknowledged. Nikki Jones and Christina Jackson continue this reflection on place identity in their discussion of the ghetto label as applied to the Fillmore neighborhood of San Francisco. They note that the label persists despite the increasing presence of relatively affluent and nonblack residents.

Certainly, urban scholars need to respect the historical origins of the term "ghetto," acknowledge its rhetorical function, and criticize its sloppy deployment. This book makes these points quite well. It urges readers to disentangle their concerns with spatially concentrated poverty, segregation, social control, marginalization, economic exploitation, and ethnic stigmatization. Placing these quite diverse conditions and processes under the ghetto rubric merely produces a chaotic category whose use distorts more than it clarifies. The making of such a strong and unequivocal argument by bringing together different authors with their separate agendas and points-of-view, though, is always fraught with dangers. On that point, it seems unfair to criticize an edited collection for the uneven quality of its contributions, the drift from editorial intent, or redundancy. Still, editors can always salvage their good intentions with a concluding chapter that discards disagreements,

bends the contributions to their will, and leaves the reader (particularly the person who reads the chapters sequentially) with a clear (even if temporary) sense of closure. No such chapter exists here. If the ghetto is no longer a useful concept, what does one do? Where, now, should the discussion about the moral geographies of cities be centered?

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Federal Fathers and Mothers: A Social History of the United States Indian Service, 1869–1933. By Cathleen D. Cahill. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2011. Pp. 384. $45.00 (cloth).

Established during the presidency of James Monroe, the Bureau of Indian Affairs is one of the federal government's oldest agencies. In *Federal Fathers and Mothers,* Cathleen Cahill provides an account of the agency's employees during a critical period in Indian-white relations: the years between the end of the Civil War and the beginning of the New Deal. During this period, the federal government pursued a policy of aggressive assimilation of American Indians. Cahill argues that the policy's result was to replace a managerial approach to regulating commercial relations between whites and Indian tribes with a social program that aimed at cultural change and sought to promote employees as exemplars of the new culture. She asserts that the Indian Service and late nineteenth-century efforts to assist other "dependent peoples" (209), along with the federal Women's and Children's Bureaus created in the early twentieth century, represent "a key episode in the formation of the modern state" (18).

The goal of Indian assimilation proved to be difficult to achieve. In part, this is explained by resistance among American Indians employed with the Indian Service. The difficulty also stemmed from the replacement of initial, equalitarian ideas with a racist ideology, which insisted that Indian people are inferior to whites and thus destined to serve as workers. In addition, Cahill demonstrates that Indian employment, intended to show American Indians the advantages of wage labor and of European-American civilization, became a way for Indian people to maintain tribal cultural identity. In unexpected ways, the shared experience of government employment contributed to the development of intertribal American Indian identity in the early twentieth century.

Cahill divides her book into three sections. In the first section, she begins by reviewing federal Indian policy from the close of the Civil War through the 1880s, when congressional enactment of the General Allotment Act of 1887 (24 Stat. 388) signaled the triumph of cultural assimilation as the goal of federal policy. The federal government classified Indians and newly emancipated former slaves as "wards," and "policy makers drew upon the household model of free-labor ideology in designing Indian policy" (11) with the objective of integrating American Indians into nineteenth-century America. The model included gendered domestic and economic roles that were to be taught and enacted by Indian Service personnel. In this section, Cahill relates developments in Indian policy to trends in post–Civil War reform and to recent historical writing on colonial relations in the United States and abroad.

In the second section, Cahill examines four broad themes in the experience of Indian Service employees, devoting separate chapters to the experiences of white women, married couples, and American Indian workers. Another chapter focuses on social relations among Indian Service employees. This is an important theme,

because nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Indian reservations were geographically isolated; interactions among employees were intense. A final chapter examines how these themes played out on the Hoopa Valley Indian Reservation in California.

Because the Indian Service tried to avoid placing tribal members on their own reservations, employment with the service often broadened the Indian workers' perspective on American Indians and fostered an intertribal American Indian identity. Cahill relies, among other sources, on the records of federal employees collected in the personnel folders at the National Personnel Records Center in St. Louis. In some cases, Cahill samples the records to determine employee career patterns, although the method of sampling is not always clear. For example, Cahill samples 55 personnel files "from a list of all 265 of the female Native employees listed as employed in the School Service in the *Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs* for 1905" (112). However, she states in a footnote that "employees with longer careers had bigger files and were thus more likely to be found, which may have skewed the sample" (285–86, n29). In other cases, Cahill appears to follow the careers of Indian Service workers who are notable for other reasons. Despite some sampling difficulties, Cahill demonstrates the potential of these records to illuminate details of federal workers' experiences. The examination of broad themes allows Cahill to provide for the first time an account of Indian Service workers that corrects broad generalizations made by previous generations of historians.

In a concluding section, Cahill returns to the national context, exploring the operation of the Indian Service in the first third of the twentieth century. With the Progressive Era emphasis on efficiency grew an increased emphasis on credentialing, even as scientific racism led policy makers to conclude that the assimilation project would be limited and that most Indians were suited only for manual labor. The Progressive Era also saw a growing number of elder federal employees in the Indian Service and elsewhere. As a result, the federal government enacted the Federal Employees Retirement Act of 1920 (41 Stat. 614), the nation's first retirement law for federal employees in the classified civil service. As Cahill shows, this law benefited white Indian Service employees much more than Indian employees because many of the latter gained appointment under Indian preference practices that circumvented the classified civil service.

At times, Cahill claims too much, as when she contends that the Indian Service employed more women during the Progressive Era than did either the Children's Bureau or the Women's Bureau (65). The Indian Service employed over 1,000 women in 1925. In the same year, the Children's Bureau and the Women's Bureau employed a total of 165 women (65). Such a comparison fails to take into account the differing missions of the agencies. The Children's Bureau and the Women's Bureau conducted research, and the Children's Bureau managed a federal grant-in-aid program that provided funds to the states for maternal and child health programs. In contrast, the Indian Service provided direct services to nearly 350,000 American Indian people living on scores of reservations, mostly in the American West. Between 5,000 and 6,000 employees worked for the Indian Service in the 1920s; in 1925, the Children's Bureau had 136 regular employees and 29 temporary employees (James A. Tobey, *The Children's Bureau: Its History, Activities and Organization*, Service Monographs of the United States Government, no. 21 [Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1925], 39–42).

Specialists in federal Indian policy will be surprised at some omissions in Cahill's discussion. For example, she does not discuss the Buy Indian Act of 1910, which directed the Indian Service to employ Indian labor "so far as may be practicable" and authorized the purchase of "the products of Indian industry" (36 Stat. 861). Nor is there a discussion of the Snyder Act of 1921, which authorized expenditures

for social and health services provided by the federal government to American Indians (42 Stat. 208). Before the Snyder Act, all federal expenditures were in theory made in fulfillment of treaty obligations. Both statutes are frequently cited today, although Cahill's account demonstrates that federal policy was fully consistent with their intent.

This is an impressive book that should be read by specialists in Indian-white relations and by social welfare historians. For the former, Cahill succeeds in putting the story of the Indian Service into the context of other events in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, notably the Freedmen's Bureau, the late nineteenth-century reformers' concerns about the pauperizing effects of direct relief, and the American occupation of the Philippines and other former Spanish colonies after the Spanish-American War. For social welfare historians, Cahill argues that the Indian Service and other attempts to help people labeled as dependent after the Civil War were important precursors of the maternalist welfare state that emerged during the Progressive Era.

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Politics and Partnerships: The Role of Voluntary Associations in America's Political Past and Present. Edited by Elisabeth S. Clemens and Doug Guthrie. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010. Pp. 352. $55.00 (cloth); $19.00 (paper).

Harold Wilensky and Charles Lebeaux famously called America the "reluctant welfare state" because the nation's levels of public spending on social programs are lower than those in other advanced industrial countries (*Industrial Society and Social Welfare: The Impact of Industrialization on the Supply and Organization of Social Welfare Services in the United States* [New York: Russell Sage, 1958], xii). The role played by voluntary organizations in the provision of social and health services is an essential and distinguishing feature of the American welfare state, as is the political advocacy role. Voluntary organizations in Germany, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, and many other countries have historically had prominent roles in service and advocacy, but the US experience with voluntary associations in the context of social policy diverges sharply from that of many other countries during the twentieth century.

Scholars offer a variety of explanations for the distinctiveness of America's voluntary sector. Wilensky and Lebeaux, like many scholars of social policy, emphasize American cultural preferences for voluntary action and participation in voluntary organizations. This explanation harkens back to the work of Alexis de Tocqueville in the nineteenth century. By contrast, Theda Skocpol suggests that the state and its political institutions have been central in shaping the voluntary sector in the United States (*Diminished Democracy: From Membership to Management in American Civic Life* [Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2003]). In this view, voluntary associations are the direct or indirect product of state policy.

Yet another perspective is offered by Lester Salamon and Helmut Anheier, who propound the "social origins theory" to account for the differential development of the voluntary sector across countries ("Social Origins of Civil Society: Explaining the Nonprofit Sector Cross-Nationally," *Voluntas* 9, no. 3 [1998]: 217). They argue that welfare states cluster into regimes, which reflect the relative strengths of the middle class and working class at the "origins" of the welfare state. The early politics of a country's welfare state then creates an important set of relationships between the public and nonprofit sectors that has an enduring influence on the

evolution of the government–voluntary organizations relationship, including the specific mix of roles and responsibilities of the voluntary sector. In the United States, where a liberal welfare-state regime prevails, the voluntary sector has played a very prominent role in service provision and the financing of social programs.

This excellent and timely book, *Politics and Partnerships*, focuses on the United States and the development of the government–voluntary sector relationship, tracing that relationship from the early days of the American republic. The book's 11 chapters are not specifically comparative, but the contributions, some with a historical focus and others with a contemporary one, collectively provide a framework for understanding the development of the government-nonprofit relationship in the United States. To an extent, this framework is consistent with scholarship by Wilensky and Lebeaux, Salamon and Anheier, and others who emphasize the historical importance of the voluntary sector in America's social policy from the very beginning of the country. Yet, to varying degrees, the authors of these chapters in *Politics and Partnerships* also call attention to the effect of politics and ideas on the government–voluntary sector relationship. At different points in time, politics exerted a profound influence on the direction and substantive content of this relationship, creating a path that shaped subsequent policy developments. In this sense, the book is compatible with Skocpol's perspective, since it acknowledges the importance of policy in shaping the voluntary sector. Yet, the authors in this volume strive to strike a balance between state-centric explanations and the explanations centered in civil society. Thus, the book's conceptual framework is rooted in the interactions among the public, nonprofit, and for-profit sectors but also in the recognition that politics and political mobilization are important in explaining key developments affecting the voluntary sector. Several authors also emphasize the increasing complexity of the government–voluntary sector relationship; they tie this complexity to the advent of new sources of public and private financing, the growth of the voluntary sector, and the demand for new and more responsive public services.

Within this framework, the chapters tend to cluster into two predominant categories: (1) discussions of the important role of voluntary associations in the policy process and in the dissemination of ideas and (2) analysis of the transformation and restructuring of the government's relationship with voluntary organizations within American social policy. Regarding the first theme, historian Johann Neem provides a comprehensive and incisive analysis of civil society in the formative years of the American republic (1776–1865). His basic argument is that American nationalism hinged at least in part on the development of civil society organizations. In the early years of the republic, American states limited the growth of voluntary organizations, and these efforts in turn hindered the growth of nationalism. Once the states liberalized rules on the formation of voluntary associations, local grassroots organizations became increasingly common and active, allowing the development of a web of relationships among citizens at the community level and formation of a national identity. However, the growth of sectional conflict in the antebellum period led to a splintering of political identity and alliances, ultimately producing divisiveness and political fragmentation, which greatly constrained the ability of the national government to overcome sectional divisions in the years prior to the Civil War. In the next chapter, Mark Hendrickson focuses on the intertwined relationships among government, private industry, and nonprofit organizations in the early part of the twentieth century. He usefully examines the role of nonprofit organizations as incubators in the advancement of new policy ideas and initiatives pertaining to labor issues, such as limits on child labor and working hours or the rules promoting unionization. This incubator role is also the subject of a chapter by James Evans, who chronicles the transformation of nonprofit research institutes, such as the Salk Institute and the RAND Corporation, from an applied research

orientation in the 1940s to a focus on more basic research by the end of the twentieth century. This pronounced shift in mission fundamentally changed the role of these nonprofit research institutes in the communication of ideas among government, corporations, and other nonprofit entities. Another chapter by Nicole Marwell examines the political role of community-based organizations in Brooklyn. For example, she very insightfully documents the ongoing relationships among local political leaders, community-based organizations, and local constituents. This "triadic" (215) relationship helps to provide political support for community organizations but also tends to lead the organizations to depend upon the policy preferences and agendas of key local politicians. Alice O'Connor's chapter focuses on the emergence of conservative philanthropy in reaction to federal social initiatives of the 1960s. As she notes, conservative philanthropists and foundations have provided extensive funding for the promotion of such market-based social reforms as vouchers and charter schools, as well as a greater utilization of faith-based organizations. Over time, conservative philanthropy has profoundly affected the discourse and agenda-setting process on a wide array of important public policy issues.

The book's second major theme, the transformation of the government-nonprofit relationship in American social policy, is illustrated in several chapters. For instance, Nicole Marwell's chapter focuses on community organizations that provide services to the disadvantaged and are almost completely dependent upon public funding. These organizations were created in the wake of the federal antipoverty initiatives of the 1960s and represent an entirely new type of nonprofit service organization. In a chapter on low-income housing and community development corporations (CDCs), Michael McQuarrie very creatively analyzes a complicated and intricate set of relationships among the public, nonprofit, and for-profit sectors, considering how those relationships shape the production of low-income housing and the support of economic development. McQuarrie focuses on policy and organizational developments in Cleveland. As he notes, the Ford Foundation provided leadership in the development of a new model of community development and low-income housing during the 1970s and 1980s. This model centered on nonprofit community organizations funded with a mix of public, philanthropic, and corporate funding. This model also received a substantial boost from the creation of the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit in 1986. Since then, a nationwide network of CDCs and nonprofit housing developers has emerged and is supported by important national intermediary organizations, such as the Local Initiatives Support Corporation (commonly known as LISC) and the Enterprise Foundation (now called Enterprise Community Partners). Low-income housing organizations and CDCs are some of the best examples of the mixed hybrid organizations that have emerged since the 1980s in response to the diversification and expansion of such policy tools as tax credits, tax-exempt bonds, vouchers, and contracts to support important social and health services.

This hybridity is also illustrated in the chapter by Omri Elisha on a partnership between a large, white, evangelical church and a much smaller African American church in Knoxville, Tennessee. As part of this partnership, the congregations collaborated with a Christian-based community development organization. Like the CDCs in the McQuarrie study, this organization received a mix of public grants, tax credits, and private donations to build low-income housing. But community organizations can also struggle with an influx of public and private funds, as expertly documented by Alyshia Gálvez in her chapter on Asociación Tepeyac, a community organization serving Mexican immigrants in New York City. In the aftermath of the September 11 tragedy, this agency received a huge infusion of public and private funds. The new resources led to the professionalization of the agency as well as to marked changes in strategic direction and governance. This

shift is quite common in smaller community organizations receiving public funds. As the agency professionalized, the relationship to its grassroots constituency also changed dramatically.

As the chapter by Elisabeth Clemens chronicles, the public-nonprofit nexus was much different in the 1930s. She details the complex New Deal politics of the government's relationship with the voluntary sector. As she notes, public subsidies of voluntary agencies such as the American Red Cross for their relief expenses were very controversial. Indeed, many voluntary sector leaders opposed the subsidies. Thus, in the early years of the New Deal, the Roosevelt administration decided that federal support for relief should be provided through public agencies at the state and local levels. This decision created a sharp division between the public sector and the voluntary sector, since voluntary agencies would have to depend upon private philanthropy to respond to social need. Just before the start of WWII, though, the administration did provide some public funding for the American Red Cross's efforts, but the issue remained politically contentious.

One other chapter has implications for the reader's understanding of the evolving government-nonprofit relationship. In his chapter on corporate philanthropy, Doug Guthrie offers a very detailed and comprehensive analysis of corporate giving practices. This is a very timely topic indeed, given the widespread interest in corporate-nonprofit partnerships. Yet, Guthrie concludes that the levels of corporate giving are still relatively small compared to levels of individual giving and government funding; thus, the potential for corporations to be a significant funder of nonprofit organizations, or to compensate for shortfalls in government funding, is quite limited.

Overall, this volume underscores the complexity of the American welfare state and of the government-nonprofit relationship in particular. The chapters by Elisha, Gálvez, Marwell, and McQuarrie profile nonprofit organizations founded after the War on Poverty and associated federal social programs. In many communities, these newer organizations have grown quite large and in many communities eclipsed the older nonprofits founded in the nineteenth century (e.g., the American Red Cross) in prominence and local influence. Moreover, the funding and governance of these younger organizations are quite different than they were in earlier periods. Public subsidies to voluntary organizations, especially organizations in the child welfare field, were common in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries in such major urban areas as Chicago and New York (see the chapter by Clemens). Overall, these subsidies were quite targeted, and public funding declined for many voluntary organizations in the twentieth century as many states passed laws against public subsidies of charities. Moreover, the advent of the Community Chest in communities throughout the country strongly encouraged voluntary agencies to rely upon local philanthropy rather than public subsidies (see Steven Rathgeb Smith and Michael Lipsky, *Nonprofits for Hire: The Welfare State in the Age of Contracting* [Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993], 47–50). The New Deal accelerated this shift to private philanthropy, notably among family service organizations, since the New Deal led many state and local governments to assume responsibility for public relief. This pushed local voluntary agencies to focus on other services, including professional social-casework services. By the 1950s, most agencies in the Community Chest network relied primarily upon private funds raised through the annual workplace campaigns. When public funds became available in the 1960s, many existing voluntary agencies initially resisted accepting them but eventually did so as the practice became commonplace; other agencies, such as community mental-health and community-action agencies, emerged in response to federal initiatives.

Partnerships between government and the voluntary sector are widely practiced but can be quite elusive, given the imbalance in resources, power, and political

influence between them. One notable partnership at the national level is the federal Social Innovation Fund to support effective and innovative programs at the local level (Corporation for National and Community Service, "Social Innovation Fund," http://www.nationalservice.gov/about/programs/innovation.asp [n.d.; accessed August 8, 2012]). The fund operates with collaboration from and the support of many leading foundations and nonprofits (including the LISC). Local nonprofits, such as low-income housing organizations and senior centers, often work closely with government, corporations, and other nonprofits in support of program initiatives. Yet, pressure for accountability, budget scarcity, and growth in competition among agencies creates obstacles that prevent nonprofits from exercising an effective voice and from influencing their relationship with government. Many government contracts with nonprofits are performance based, particularly those for welfare-to-work, foster care, and mental-health services. As the Gálvez chapter illustrates, even services provided through contracts that lack strict performance requirements require the contracting nonprofit to meet high expectations on accountability and professional standards. Given the funding environment, agencies face financial pressure to grow, diversify their revenue base, and where appropriate, engage in corporate partnerships. In current contracting regimes, the staff and volunteers in voluntary agencies may face severe constraints on professional discretion and autonomy, creating serious obstacles to their ability to partner collaboratively with government. In essence, the term "partnership" does not accurately convey the complexity of the government–voluntary sector relationship, which can also vary significantly by policy field.

An assessment of the implications for the American welfare state of the evolving government-nonprofit relationship also defies generalization. Arguably, government-funded, voluntary community organizations (even those only partially funded by the state) fostered an expansion of the American welfare state in a wide array of social and health services, including home care, home health, transitional housing, emergency assistance, residential care for the mentally ill and developmentally disabled, and foster care. The recession has forced states and localities to make painful cutbacks in the past few years, but service levels are still much higher than they were 20 years ago. Yet, the use of voluntary agencies funded by government can mask the government's central funding and regulatory role, enabling government to curtail services and enact sanctions on organizations or clients in ways that do not provoke public outcry. Arguably, the ongoing cutbacks and sanctions in social services funded through the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families program are good examples (see Joe Soss, Richard Fording, and Sanford Schram, *Disciplining the Poor: Neoliberal Paternalism and the Persistent Power of Race* [Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011]). Medicaid funding enabled the expansion of nonprofit (and for-profit) home care, but most citizens and many policy makers do not credit government policy or Medicaid with support for this valued community service.

Overall, America may still be considered a "reluctant welfare state" (Wilensky and Lebeaux, xii]), given its greater reliance than European welfare states on voluntary organizations and private philanthropy rather than government. Yet, as several chapters vividly portray, the American welfare state has also been transformed since the 1960s. The expansion of voluntary social and health services has been fueled by an increasingly complex mix of contracts, tax credits, vouchers, quasi-vouchers (e.g., delivery of Medicaid benefits), tax deductions, and client payments subsidized by government. Chris Howard calls this mix of indirect and direct subsidies "the hidden welfare state" (*The Hidden Welfare State: Tax Expenditures and Social Policy in the United States* [New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997], 3). More recently, Suzanne Mettler called attention to the "submerged state" (*The Submerged State: How Invisible Government Policies Undermine American Democracy* [Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011]). By this she refers to extensive govern-

ment support in a wide variety of policy areas, such as higher education, housing, health, and social services, that is often obscured from the general public by a reliance on tax credits, tax deductions, and grants. As a consequence, citizens do not fully understand and realize the many different ways in which government addresses important public problems. Further, this web of support can create political constituencies that support the continuance and expansion of such benefits even as the average citizen remains largely disengaged politically. The Low-Income Housing Tax Credit persists and grew over many different administrations. National research institutes remain an important component of America's research strategy, though national priorities have changed dramatically over time. Hospitals and large health-care organizations, such as home health agencies, are often successful in advocating for specific government funding programs (or protecting their existing funding), yet smaller organizations, including social services agencies and other community programs, face great difficulties in political mobilization and can be quite vulnerable to government influence. Asociación Tepeyac provides an example of such an organization. Moreover, even large voluntary organizations may be ill positioned to fight inappropriate regulations and cutbacks or to advocate for broad-based social policy reform.

Importantly, the many fine chapters in this book suggest that voluntary organizations can effect policy change and reform. Yet, overcoming the obstacles to effective advocacy will require vigorous and skilled advocacy by nonprofit service providers as well as intermediary organizations, such as human service coalitions and statewide associations that represent nonprofits. Policy design that incorporates nonprofit participation in the governance of nonprofit services funded by government can also be very helpful in promoting meaningful, collaborative program implementation. In addition, voluntary organizations can build community support by increasing transparency in governance and operations. More active efforts to engage local citizens in the work of local community organizations through volunteering, participation in agency governance, and participation in advisory committees can also broaden the organizations' base of community support as well as enhance citizens' awareness of the connections between local agencies and government policy. As Skocpol (2003) suggests, increasing attention to local organizing is likely to strengthen local voluntary organizations and enhance the representation of citizen interests in the policy process.

More than ever, social rights hinge on the capacity and performance of voluntary organizations, yet the discourse on social innovation, performance management, and accountability tends to focus attention on the individual agency and its capacity rather than on the agency-government relationship. The future of the voluntary sector and social rights depends on the ability of voluntary agencies to enlist citizens and government in a shared agenda that supports adequate and effective public policies and voluntary agency programs.

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Brief Notices

Not Under My Roof: Parents, Teens, and the Culture of Sex. By Amy T. Schalet. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011. Pp. 312. $85.00 (cloth); $29.00 (paper).

Not Under My Roof begins by asking two parents, one from the Netherlands and one from California, whether or not they would allow their teenagers to sleep over at a partner's house. Though, as Schalet points out, both parents are "white, middle class, and secular or moderately Christian" (2), the American mother answers that she would definitely be opposed, while the Dutch father would have reservations only if the sleepover occurred outside of a steady relationship. Schalet characterizes the differences between the two national cultures based on two different breeds of individualism, adversarial and interdependent. Adolescent sexuality in America, she explains, is associated with separation from parents, who typically treat sex in a negative way, encourage prevention and abstinence, and thereby hinder dialogue with their teenagers. In the Netherlands, on the other hand, sexual education emphasizes the positive aspects of sex for both males and females. Schalet interviews both teenagers and parents across economic and religious sociodemographics and departs from previous studies on teenage sex by focusing on the relationship between parent and child (rather than sex as a social phenomenon). She contextualizes the research with histories of contraception and gender, comparing the sexual revolution in the United States to a similar moral revolution in the Netherlands.

Poor and Homeless in the Sunshine State: Down and Out in Theme Park Nation. By James D. Wright and Amy M. Donley. New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 2011. Pp. 325. $39.95 (cloth).

After the opening of Walt Disney World in 1971, Orlando experienced an economic boom that doubled its population but split the area in two. Disney World created thousands of jobs and invested in the state but also led to an unequal distribution of wealth, where low-wage jobs did not cover rising housing costs. *Poor and Homeless in the Sunshine State* examines the tensions that arise from such fast growth and the experiences of the lower-income and homeless population in central Florida. Wright and Donley studied the homeless population of Orlando from 2003 through the recession of 2009–10 and give analysis of many subgroups, including women, the elderly, recovering addicts, those who choose to live in shelters, and those who do not. They draw on population surveys, their own research, and extensive interviews. Chapter 4, specifically, looks at frequent flyers and overnight housing: though most of the homeless in Florida are irregular, most of the beds in shelters are taken by people who are homeless for longer. In addition, the study covers perceptions about the homeless and volunteer organizations, as well as a national survey of policies, and policies relating to homeless people.

Thyra J. Edwards: Black Activist in the Global Freedom Struggle. By Gregg Andrews. Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2011. Pp. 256. $40.00 (cloth).

Born in Houston, Texas, in 1897, Thyra Edwards became a prominent black organizer and activist in the first half of the twentieth century, traveling around the country and the world. In this biography, Gregg Andrews traces Edwards's travels and involvement with political and social organizations, including those devoted to civil rights and women's rights, the Communist party, unions, and the Loyalists in the Spanish Civil War. Drawing on FBI records as well as newspaper articles and her own personal papers, this chronological account of Edwards's fight against racism and inequality is the first full-length biography of the advocate.

Groping toward Democracy: African American Social Welfare Reform in St. Louis, 1910–1949. By Priscilla A. Dowden-White. Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2011. Pp. 320. $44.95 (cloth).

"In *Groping toward Democracy: African American Social Welfare Reform in St. Louis, 1910–1949*, historian Priscilla A. Dowden-White presents an on-the-ground view of local institution building and community organizing campaigns initiated by African American social welfare reformers. Through extensive research, the author places African American social welfare reform efforts within the vanguard of interwar community and neighborhood organization, reaching beyond the 'racial uplift' and 'behavior' models of the studies preceding hers. She explores one of the era's chief organizing principles, the 'community as a whole' idea, and deliberates on its relationship to segregation and the St. Louis black community's methods of reform. *Groping toward Democracy* depicts the dilemmas organizers faced in this segregated time, explaining how they pursued the goal of full, uncontested black citizenship while still seeking to maximize the benefits available to African Americans in segregated institutions. The book's nuanced mapping of the terrain of social welfare offers an unparalleled view of the progress brought forth by the early-twentieth-century crusade for democracy and equality." (Publisher's synopsis)

Quasi-Experimental Research Designs. By Bruce A. Thyer. Pocket Guides to Social Work Research Methods. New York: Oxford University Press, 2012. Pp. 216. $29.99 (paper).

"Quasi-experimental research designs allow researchers to compare groups, and the use of increasingly sophisticated programs provides greater statistical control for what has become the most widely employed research approach used to evaluate the outcomes of social work programs and policies. This pocket guide describes the logic, design, and conduct of the range of such designs, encompassing pre-experiments, quasi-experiments making use of a control or comparison group, and time-series designs. An introductory chapter describes the valuable role these types of studies have played in social work, from the 1930s to the present. Subsequent chapters delve into each design type's major features, the kinds of questions it is capable of answering, and its strengths and limitations. By linking the theoretical discussion of quasi-experimental designs with actual applications in social work literature, the usefulness and vitality of these research methods comes alive for readers." (Publisher's synopsis)

Policy Creation and Evaluation: Understanding Welfare Reform in the United States. By Richard Hoefer. Pocket Guides to Social Work Research Methods. New York: Oxford University Press, 2011. Pp. 240. $29.95 (paper).

"Although practitioners do not often identify an explicit focus on social welfare policy, the analysis (what it is) and evaluation (what it does) of policy is basic to social work practice. This unique pocket guide presents a case study on one of the most important domestic policy decisions in the post-WWII era, the passage of the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA) of 1996. This law ended welfare as we knew it by creating the Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) program and closing the Aid to Families with Dependent Children program. Examining the law through three decision-making models assists readers in understanding TANF's historical antecedents, its political and power implications, and the way in which it meets social and economic goals. Individual chapters demonstrate how programs such as TANF are evaluated and the methods that can be used, such as primarily qualitative, primarily quantitative, and mixed-methods evaluation techniques. Illustrating the advantages and disadvantages of each approach for evaluation, Hoefer makes use of the numerous studies undertaken in the thirteen years since welfare reform and its 2006 reauthorization." (Publisher's synopsis)

Qualitative Methods for Practice Research. By Jeffrey Longhofer, Jerry Floersch, and Janet Hoy. Pocket Guides to Social Work Research Methods. New York: Oxford University Press, 2012. Pp. 216. $37.50 (paper).

"Qualitative methods have become increasingly popular among researchers, and while many comprehensive textbooks describe the standard techniques and philosophical assumptions, it is often assumed that practitioners are consumers of research and not producers. This innovative book describes how qualitative methods can be used to investigate the in-vivo use of theory in social work practice. It offers not just a comprehensive overview of methods, but a concise, accessible guide focused on how to study and explicate application of theory, and the creative tension that inevitably exists between theory and practice. Theory-to-practice gaps are indispensable conditions for conducting engaged scholarship, which in turn promotes collaboration between researchers and practitioners in addressing practice-related problems in real-world settings. Engaged scholarship and critical realist assumptions are applied to three case studies that combine research questions with data collection techniques and analytic strategies. Thematic, grounded theory, and narrative research techniques are all illustrated, including original quick-start instructions for using ATLAS.ti software. Institutional ethnography is also presented as a method that is particularly useful for social work practice settings." (Publisher's synopsis)

Research Integrity and Responsible Conduct of Research. Building Social Work Research Capacity. By Ann Nichols-Casebolt. New York: Oxford University Press, 2011. Pp. 170. $35.00 (paper).

"*Research Integrity and Responsible Conduct of Research* provides specific guidelines regarding the practical considerations, recommendations, and tools in the ethical

and responsible practice of social work research. Using core instructional areas identified by the U.S. Office of Research Integrity, this essential guide covers data acquisition, management, sharing and ownership; conflict of interest and commitment; subjects' protection; research misconduct; publication practices and responsible authorship; mentor and mentee responsibilities; peer review; and collaborative science. For each core area, the book identifies specific issues that are relevant for social work researchers. . . . Case studies . . . are also included. Drawing on research, curriculum models, and identified best practices that have been primarily developed for biomedical researchers, the book presents practical strategies for educating and promoting [the responsible conduct of research] among social scientists." (Publisher's synopsis)

Building Research Culture and Infrastructure. By Ruth G. McRoy, Jerry P. Flanzer, and Joan Levy Zlotnik. New York: Oxford University Press, 2011. Pp. 210. $36.50 (paper).

"This book provides a roadmap to building research capacity. It outlines specific leadership strategies that deans and directors can use to access federal research funds; incentivize interdisciplinary research; enhance mentorship relationships between senior and junior researchers; and make strategic hires. The book also identifies specific strategies to promote research by junior faculty and graduate students; forge partnerships between the university and local community and state agencies; identify potential grant funders; and write successful grants." (Publisher's synopsis)

Erratum

Because of an editing error, several estimates are incorrectly presented as positive in table 2 of Chris M. Herbst's contribution, "Footloose and Fancy Free? Two Decades of Single Mothers' Subjective Well-Being" (*Social Service Review* 86, no. 2 [June 2012]: 204). The corrected table is presented with this note, and the editors deeply regret the error.

Table 2

TRENDS IN GLOBAL LIFE SATISFACTION FOR SINGLE MOTHERS, 1986–2005

	Comparison Group					
	Single Childless Women			Married Mothers		
Variable	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Panel A (full sample):						
Single mothers × trend	.321	−.019	−.323*	.600*	.039	−.373**
	(.301)	(.071)	(.123)	(.283)	(.063)	(.124)
Comparison group × trend	−.155	−.018	−.057	−.036	.061	−.023
	(.197)	(.063)	(.078)	(.146)	(.062)	(.037)
Equality of trends (*p*-value)	.140	.985	.060	.015	.796	.012
Panel B (low-skilled sample):						
Single mothers × trend	.550*	.041	−.386**	.749**	.066	−.427**
	(.272)	(.088)	(.120)	(.259)	(.082)	(.124)
Comparison group × trend	−.346	−.036	−.045	−.079	.095	−.025
	(.253)	(.081)	(.091)	(.171)	(.075)	(.048)
Equality of trends (*p*-value)	.007	.506	.005	.015	.779	.003
Dependent variable	FI	DA	DD	FI	DA	DD
Estimation method	OP	OLS	OLS	OP	OLS	OLS

NOTE.—FI = full index; DA = participant response is "definitely agree"; DD = participant response is "definitely disagree"; OLS = ordinary least squares regression; OP = ordered probit. Dependent variable is response to "I am very satisfied with the way things are going in my life these days." Standard errors, shown in parentheses, are adjusted for clustering by year. The dependent variable in cols. 1 and 4 is a continuous measure ranging from 1 ("definitely disagree") to 6 ("definitely agree").The dependent variable in cols. 2 and 5 is a binary indicator for "definitely agree" with the life satisfaction statement. The dependent variable in cols. 3 and 6 is a binary indicator for "definitely disagree" with the life satisfaction statement. The low-skilled subsample in panel B is composed of women with some college or less education. The specification tests are of the null hypothesis of the equality of the trend coefficients (with the *p*-value shown).

*$p < .05$.

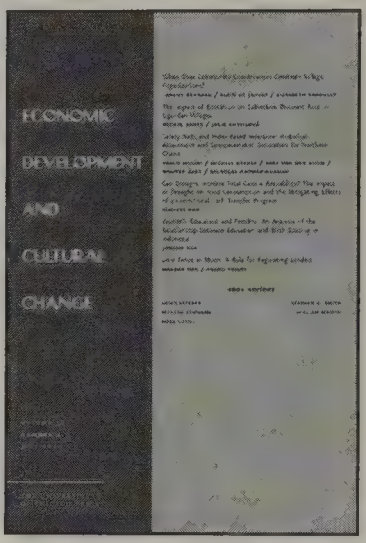
**$p < .01$.

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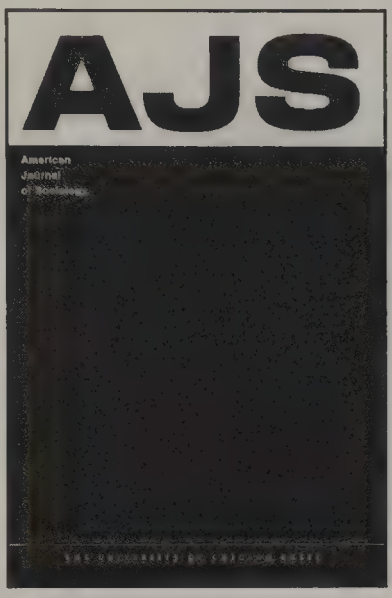
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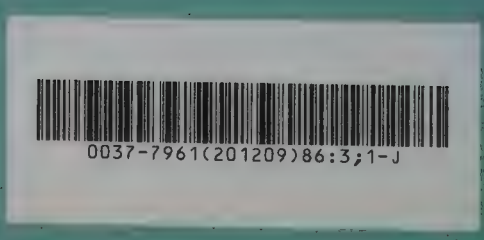
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Outsourcing Meals: Effects of Maternal Work on Children's School Meal Participation

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Maternal work may affect how mothers allocate time toward activities related to children's diet and overall well-being. One potential consequence is that mothers may outsource meal preparation. In particular, school meals might replace brown-bag meals because they are subsidized, convenient, and nutritionally regulated. This study examines whether increases in maternal work influence children's school breakfast and lunch participation, addressing the endogeneity of maternal work using local labor market indicators as instrumental variables. Results suggest that children whose mothers work are more likely to participate in school lunch. However, these children are less likely to participate in school breakfast and more likely to eat breakfast at home with family than are children of nonworking women. These results are qualitatively similar across full- and part-time work status and various socioeconomic groups, although the magnitudes vary. The article concludes with a discussion of the potential mechanisms underlying the findings and their policy implications.

Introduction

Labor force participation among mothers, especially those with school-aged children, has expanded dramatically over the last 4 decades (Bureau of Labor Statistics 2011). The increase in work is likely to affect mothers' allocation of time toward activities related to children's diet, physical activity, and their overall well-being (Cawley and Liu 2012). These activities include household work (Bianchi 2000), meal preparation time (Cutler, Glaeser, and Shapiro 2003), and consumption of meals

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prepared away from home (Kant and Graubard 2004). Indeed, a growing body of literature links maternal employment with childhood obesity (Anderson, Butcher, and Levine 2003; Anderson and Butcher 2006; Phipps, Lethbridge, and Burton 2006; Chia 2008; Ruhm 2008; Fertig, Glomm, and Tchernis 2009; Liu et al. 2009; Morrissey, Dunifon, and Kalil 2011).

One potential consequence of such time reallocation is that mothers may choose to outsource meal preparation for their children. In particular, school meals might replace brown-bag meals. This article examines whether maternal work affects children's school breakfast and lunch participation. The implications of the findings are important for several reasons. First, outsourcing meal preparation to schools is likely to free up a nontrivial amount of time that mothers may spend on activities that enhance their own or their children's well-being (e.g., exercise or reading to children). Second, participation in school meal programs could potentially mitigate adverse changes in children's dietary patterns resulting from maternal work, such as skipping meals or eating prepared foods that are less nutritious. School meal programs were originally designed to serve as a nutritional safety net and were revamped in recent years to address the diverse and changing nutritional needs of children. The evidence to date is somewhat mixed and suggests that while school breakfast participation may improve overall nutrition, school lunch participation may do the opposite (see Millimet, Tchernis, and Hussain [2010] for a brief review). Examining how maternal work influences school breakfast and lunch participation can shed light on the potential pathways linking maternal work to childhood obesity. Finally, understanding the determinants of school meal participation can help school nutrition programs meet the evolving needs of children and their families.

This article analyzes data from the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study—Kindergarten Class (ECLS-K), which provides school breakfast and lunch participation, maternal work, and detailed socioeconomic data for a nationally representative sample of elementary school students during their first, third, and fifth grades (Tourangeau et al. 2006). Using pooled data from these three grades, the authors estimate the relationship between maternal work and the likelihood of children eating school breakfast and lunch. Maternal work may influence children's participation in school meals through two mechanisms: an increase in household income and a reduction in mothers' available time. Quasi-experimental methods, namely, instrumental variables regressions, are used to isolate plausibly exogenous variation in maternal work. Because the models in this study are conditional on household income, these estimates isolate the effects that operate through the time constraint. These effects are identified using variation in labor market conditions, particularly the unemployment rate, across states (within a region). Models are estimated separately for school breakfast and lunch participation because the ef-

fects of maternal work may differ for school breakfast and lunch. For example, effects may differ if parents take advantage of the opportunity to spend quality-enhancing time with their children at breakfast (an option not available at lunch), parents' work schedules are not amenable to school breakfast times, or parents perceive greater stigma associated with school breakfast participation.

Very little is currently known about how maternal work influences school meal participation. The existing empirical literature on school meal participation either omits maternal work or treats it as exogenous, which is problematic for two reasons. First, economic theory clearly posits that households make decisions regarding the allocation of time across employment, child rearing, and other household activities simultaneously. Second, households with working mothers may differ from those with nonworking mothers in ways that available observables cannot address (e.g., preferences for healthy lifestyle). Addressing these concerns is critical to understanding the relationship between maternal work and school meal participation.

Background and Literature

Constraints on time allocation for US families are evolving with changes in the female labor supply. Since the 1970s, the labor supply of mothers with school-aged children has expanded dramatically. The employment-population ratio of mothers whose youngest child is between 6 and 17 years of age increased from 51 percent in 1975 to 74 percent in 2005. The increased labor supply likely influences the way mothers allocate time to activities related to children's diet, physical activity, and overall well-being. Recent studies show that maternal employment is associated with reductions in time spent grocery shopping and cooking, a greater likelihood of purchasing prepared foods (Cawley and Liu 2012), reduced meal preparation time (Cutler et al. 2003), and increases in consumption of meals prepared away from home (Kant and Graubard 2004).[1] Away-from-home foods are linked to a higher risk of childhood obesity (Institute of Medicine 2005) because they have a higher fat density and lower nutrient density than foods prepared at home (Lin, Guthrie, and Frazao 1999). There is also evidence that maternal employment is associated with increases in children's body mass index (BMI; Anderson et al. 2003; Anderson and Butcher 2006; Phipps et al. 2006; Chia 2008; Ruhm 2008; Fertig et al. 2009; Liu et al. 2009; Morrissey et al. 2011).

The American Time Use Survey provides an informative snapshot of households' time-use patterns (BLS 2006). Mothers with school-aged children spend a nontrivial average of 50 minutes per day on food prepara-

1. There is also evidence that mother's compensate by reducing leisure and sleep time (Bianchi 2000).

tion. By comparison, these mothers spend about 50 minutes per day caring for children and 11 minutes per day in physical activity. There are considerable differences in the time-use patterns of employed and unemployed mothers. Averaging across full- and part-time work, employed mothers spend an average of 4.75 hours working, 43 minutes in food preparation, 44 minutes caring for children, and 11 minutes in physical activity. In contrast, unemployed mothers devote considerably more time to these activities. They spend about 70 minutes per day in food preparation, 68 minutes caring for children, and 13 minutes in physical activities. These patterns indicate that employed mothers spend on average 38 percent less time (or 3.15 fewer hours per week) on meal preparation compared to unemployed mothers. Some of the observed differences in time allocated to meal preparation may be facilitated by outsourcing meals, perhaps in part through school meal participation. Interestingly, the ATUS also suggests that fathers spend substantially less time in food preparation regardless of mothers' employment, because mothers' increased responsibilities are enabled by reductions in their leisure time.

School meals are available to all children attending participating schools through the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) and School Breakfast Program (SBP). The NSLP provides free, reduced-price, and full-priced meals to more than 30 million children annually, and the SBP provides meals to nearly 10 million children. Previous studies demonstrate an association between school meal participation and eligibility for free and reduced-price meals, socioeconomic characteristics, food assistance program participation, region, urbanicity, parental involvement, and the price of school meals (Gleason 1995; Wemmerus, Forkosh, and Almond 1996; Dunifon and Kowaleski-Jones 2001). While there are common determinants, participation in school breakfast may be subject to greater stigma due to the common perception that it serves primarily low-income students (see, e.g., McDonnell et al. 2004). Additional programmatic factors such as the timing and location of school breakfast also predict participation (Bartfeld and Kim 2010).

Less is known, however, about how maternal work influences school meal participation. John Akin and colleagues (1983) find that increases in mother's work hours, conditional on household income, are associated with increases in school lunch participation. But the relationship is statistically significant only for older children ages 12–18 years. Phillip Gleason (1995) predicts that children of working mothers are slightly less likely to eat school lunch and breakfast, conditional on household income, but the differences are not statistically significant. A descriptive paper by Mary Kay Crepinsek and Nancy Burstein (2004) finds that children ages 5–8 years are less likely to eat a school breakfast and less likely to eat any breakfast if their mothers are employed full time compared to children whose mothers do not work full time, but again these differences are not statistically significant. Children of unemployed mothers are sta-

tistically significantly more likely to eat a school lunch but also statistically significantly more likely to skip lunch altogether, though differences in skipping meals are small. However, these cross-tabulations do not control for the availability of school breakfast and lunch programs at the children's school, nor do they control for income or other child and family characteristics. More recently, Judith Bartfeld and Myoung Kim (2010) use the ECLS-K data to examine the determinants of participation in the SBP among third graders, conditioning among schools that offer school breakfast. They find that, among two-parent households, participation in SBP is more likely among children with two employed parents than among those with one employed parent. In single-parent households, the parent's employment is negatively associated with SBP participation. These results suggest that the relationship between parental employment and child's SBP participation depends on whether there are one or two parents in the household. However, the study does not distinguish between maternal and paternal employment.

There are two main limitations of the existing literature on maternal labor supply and school meal participation. First, these studies do not address the simultaneity of school meal participation and maternal work decisions. Economic models of household behavior indicate that a mother's decisions about time allocation, such as how much time to devote to household activities, child care, and market activities, should be modeled simultaneously (Becker 1981). Second, these studies may also suffer from selection bias if working and nonworking mothers differ on unobservable factors correlated with school meal participation. The goal of this article is to improve understanding of the possible causal effects of maternal work on school meal participation by addressing these concerns. If maternal work does have causal effects on school meal participation, there may be implications for children's nutrition and health if school meals are more or less nutritious than the available alternatives.

Conceptual Framework

The study's conceptual framework is based on economic models of household time allocation where households derive utility from commodities produced using time and market inputs that are substitutable (Becker 1981). This section describes a simplified model of maternal time allocation that illustrates the trade-offs mothers face related to work and their children's school meal participation. Households maximize use (U), which is derived from market goods (X) and child quality (Q), subject to budget and time constraints.[2] The budget (M) is a function of

2. In this simplified conceptual model, paternal contributions in the form of income and time allocations are held constant. Nevertheless, in the estimation, the authors examine the sensitivity of the results to controls for paternal employment and household income. The ECLS-K data do not provide maternal and paternal income separately.

maternal work and may be allocated to market goods consumed at market prices (P), including purchased meals and their prices. Child quality, in turn, is produced by a combination of time and market inputs, including mothers' time with their children (C), mothers' time in household activities (H), and market goods. Mothers must distribute their fixed allocation of time (T) between market work (W), time with children (C), time in other household activities, including preparing brown-bag and home meals (H), and finally leisure and sleep (L). Because the total time available is fixed, increases in time allocated to market work requires a reduction in time spent on household production, time with children, leisure and sleep time, or some combination thereof. Mothers may substitute time inputs for market goods in the production of child quality. The reallocation would depend on the net marginal utility of time spent on these competing uses:

$$\text{Max}U(X, Q) \text{ subject to } M(W) = PX \text{ and } T = C + W + H + L,$$

$$\text{where } Q = Q(C, H, X).$$

An increase in maternal market work will have two immediate consequences for school meal participation: (1) an increase in household income (income effect) and (2) a decrease in time available for other activities (time effect). The income effect is likely to be negative. Higher income leads to greater ability to afford meals outside of the programs, which are often associated with stigma (e.g., McDonnell et al. 2004). A higher income may also make the children less likely to qualify for free or reduced-price meals, which will increase the price of school meals, further reducing participation.

The focus of this article, however, is the time effect of maternal work on school lunch and breakfast participation, which is ambiguous a priori. The time effect on school lunch participation may be zero if working mothers reduce time spent on other activities (including leisure and sleep) rather than reducing time spent in meal preparation. The choice to reduce meal preparation time versus other activities depends on the marginal utility of those activities. If mothers choose to reduce meal preparation time, they may do so by increasing reliance on prepackaged or processed foods, purchasing meals away from home, or relying on school meals. The relative cost and quality of these meal options may vary; consequently, the choice would depend on their net marginal benefits. School lunches are a strong candidate in this regard because they are often subsidized, convenient, and required to meet federal nutrition guidelines. Therefore, the time effect on school lunch participation is likely to be positive.

The same logic applies to the time effect on school breakfast participation with three potentially significant modifications. For lunch, mothers

had only two options: prepare a brown-bag meal or have their children eat a school meal. For breakfast, however, the children may also eat breakfast at home with the family, which has the potential to benefit child quality. This option may represent an important opportunity for working mothers to spend time with their children because they are less likely to have the opportunity to do so immediately after school (especially among those working full time).[3] The choice may also be influenced by scheduling constraints. These constraints are likely to be more binding and complex among working mothers who may find it difficult to coordinate work schedules with children's school breakfast schedule. Finally, stigma may limit school breakfast participation among children of working mothers (relative to lunch) because it is more commonly perceived as targeting low-income students. Because of the potential benefits of time spent with children at breakfast, scheduling complications, and the perceived stigma associated with school breakfast participation, working mothers may be more likely to outsource their children's lunch than their breakfast. Consequently, the time effect on school breakfast participation is likely to be smaller than the effect on lunch participation. It may even be negative if mothers' preferences for spending time with their children or concerns about scheduling and stigma dominate. The relative importance of these factors may differ by socioeconomic characteristics. For example, the stigma may be less influential among those nonworking mothers who already participate in public assistance programs.

Empirical Strategy

Empirical estimation of the causal effect of maternal work on school meal participation requires consideration of two important issues. First, the model described above suggests that the decision to participate in school meals should be modeled jointly with the mother's decision to work. And second, the empirically observed relationship between maternal work and school meal participation may simply capture the inherent heterogeneity between working and nonworking mothers. For example, working mothers may be those who are less attracted to child-rearing and household activities in general, or conversely they may be supermoms who attempt to spend substantial quality time with their children in addition to working. These unobservable characteristics will likely bias the results of ordinary least-squares (OLS) regressions.

Although not focused on school meal participation, a number of previous studies address the endogeneity of maternal labor supply decisions

3. Another alternative is differential skipping of meals by children of working and nonworking mothers. Skipping meals is less common among elementary school children relative to middle or high school children. Moreover, differences among elementary school children's meal skipping based on maternal work hours have been found to be small (Crepinsek and Burstein 2004).

with respect to other child outcomes. There are two main approaches that have been used in this literature. The first approach relies on panel data to estimate mother or child fixed-effect (CFE) models (see, e.g., Anderson et al. 2003; James-Burdumy 2005; Gordon, Kaestner, and Korenman 2007). An important limitation of this approach is the strong assumption that changes over time in maternal labor supply occur for reasons exogenous to the outcome of interest. Yet studies have shown that child health has a strong positive effect on maternal labor supply (Gould 2004; Corman, Noonan, and Reichman 2005), which implies that CFE estimates may be biased. The second approach uses local area conditions, specifically local labor market conditions and child-care regulations, as instrumental variables (IV) for maternal labor supply (e.g., Anderson et al. 2003; Baum 2003; Cawley and Liu 2012). Some of these studies use IV estimation on cross-sectional data, while others estimate CFE-IV models. While CFE-IV models are, in principle, more appealing, labor market and child-care regulation instruments tend to become weaker predictors of maternal labor supply when child fixed effects are included because there is less variation in these variables over time. For example, Patricia Anderson and colleague (2003) use longitudinal data on labor market conditions and child-care regulations in the state to identify changes in a mother's labor supply over time (CFE-IV model). However, these instruments are weak in the first stage, and the authors had to rely on child and mother fixed-effect models without IVs to estimate the impact of maternal employment on childhood obesity. Likewise, Susanne James-Burdumy (2005) uses similar instruments to estimate the effect of maternal labor supply on children's cognitive development but found a weak first stage.

Although the regressions in this study employ panel data on students, the identification strategy relies primarily on cross-sectional variation in the instruments to estimate the effect of maternal work on children's school meal participation. Consistent with previous studies, this study uses the state unemployment rate as the primary IV, under the assumption that it is likely exogenous to school meal participation, except for its indirect impact through labor supply decisions. To address concerns regarding bias due to unobservable state-specific heterogeneity, the authors undertake a number of robustness checks, described later.

The authors jointly estimate a recursive bivariate probit for mother's work status and her child's school lunch (or school breakfast) participation status. The latent variable specification of this model is as follows:

1. $W_i^* = \alpha_1 \mathbf{X}_{ii} + \alpha_2 \mathbf{Z}_i + \upsilon_i$
2. $SL_i^* = \beta_1 TW_i + \beta_2 X_i + \varepsilon_i$

$$E(\upsilon_i) = E(\epsilon_i) = 0; \ \text{var}(\upsilon_i) = \text{var}(\epsilon_i) = 1 \ ; \ \text{cov}(\upsilon_i, \epsilon_i) = \rho.$$

$$W = 0 \text{ if } W_i^* \leq 0,$$
$$= 1 \text{ if } W_i^* > 0,$$
$$SL_i = 0 \text{ if } SL_i^* \leq 0,$$
$$= 1 \text{ if } SL_i^* > 0.$$

W^* and SL^* are the latent variables, and W and SL are the observed variables for mother's work status and the child's lunch participation, respectively. The vector $\mathbf{X}$ includes child and family characteristics, such as gender, race-ethnicity, mother's education and age, single-parent family, number of siblings, indicators for urbanicity, region fixed effects, and grade fixed effects to control for the dynamics of participation as children age. In addition, the models include indicator variables for each of the detailed income categories and indicators for free- and reduced-price meal eligibility in order to isolate the effects of maternal work that operate through the time constraint.[4] The vector $\mathbf{Z}$ includes variables that influence whether and how much a mother works but do not otherwise (independently) influence her child's school meal participation. Specifically, the vector includes the state unemployment rate in the main specification but also state average weekly wages and state child-care regulations in sensitivity analyses. The model is estimated using maximum likelihood estimation on pooled data from the first-, third-, and fifth-grade waves. Standard errors in all models are clustered at the state level, except in single-equation probit regressions (without state level instruments) when they are clustered at the child level.

The bivariate probit model is particularly appealing because it allows the authors to address a number of estimation challenges within the same model. First, it models the dichotomous school meal participation and maternal work decisions nonlinearly. Second, this approach explicitly models the correlation between the two decisions and estimates it from the data. Third, it addresses the endogeneity of mother's work decision through the exclusion restriction.

The authors compare the estimates from the above model with those from separate probit regressions for school lunch participation and mother's work status that do not account for the endogeneity of mother's work or the joint decision process. All models control for the full set of covariates. The same set of models is also estimated for school breakfast participation in order to evaluate whether maternal work affects this outcome differently.

The study tests the sensitivity of the results to alternate specifications of the model. The authors start by testing whether the results hold for both full- and part-time work by estimating a joint probit-ordered probit

4. Although exact income is not available in all survey years, the ECLS-K provides a 13-category income variable.

model.[5] Next, the authors examine the sensitivity of the findings to the choice of instrument by iteratively adding variables that capture the state's child-care regulations and average weekly wages as additional instruments. Then, additional state covariates are included to ensure that state-specific heterogeneity does not drive the results. Finally, the authors examine the issue of heterogeneous effects by estimating interactions between maternal work and family characteristics such as single-parent household, number of siblings, maternal education, and welfare participation to determine whether the results are driven by particular socioeconomic groups.

Data

The models are estimated using data from the ECLS-K. The ECLS-K surveyed a nationally representative sample of children attending kindergarten in 1998–99, followed by repeated data collection in first grade (spring 2000), third grade (spring 2002), and fifth grade (spring 2004).[6] Data on children's participation in the school breakfast and lunch programs, as well as maternal labor supply in each grade, are obtained through the parent questionnaire typically completed by the children's mothers.[7] The school meal participation questions in the parent survey are as follows: "Does [CHILD] usually receive a complete lunch offered at school? By complete lunch, I mean a complete meal such as a salad, soup, a sandwich, or a hot meal that is offered each day at a fixed price, not just milk, snacks, ice cream, or a lunch he/she brought from home." And, "Does [CHILD] usually receive a breakfast provided by the school?"

The availability of detailed socioeconomic characteristics for the children and their families allows the models to include a rich set of control variables. The analysis sample includes first-, third-, and fifth-grade data for children who attended public schools that participated in the lunch as well as breakfast programs.[8]

The authors compiled state-level instruments, such as state labor market conditions, to address the potential endogeneity of maternal work and

5. This model differentiates part-time ($W_i^* \leq \delta$) versus full-time work ($W_i^* > \delta$), where δ is the cutoff number of hours.

6. See Tourangeau and colleagues (2006) for more information on the survey design and instruments.

7. Measurement error in parent-reported data is less likely to be a concern in this study for several reasons. First, the school meal participation question asks about "usual" participation, which mothers are more likely to report accurately than participation on a specific day. Second, participation rates in the ECLS-K have been shown to be comparable to those from administrative data (Schanzenbach 2009). And third, school meal participation is the dependent variable in the analyses and so measurement error will not affect the consistency of the estimates, though it may make the estimates noisier.

8. The authors excluded kindergarten data from the analyses because they are confounded by half-day kindergarten programs. The data do not distinguish whether the kindergartner was in school while breakfast and lunch were being served.

work hours. In the main specification, the authors include only the unemployment rate as an instrument. But in robustness checks with multiple instruments, the state's maximum child-to-staff ratio for 3-year-olds in child-care centers and annual average weekly wage for private nonagricultural workers are included as additional instruments.[9] These factors are likely to affect household labor supply decisions but are unlikely to have any other direct effects on children's school meal participation. The labor force participation and employment of women, particularly mothers, is likely to be more sensitive to labor market conditions than male labor supply. Likewise, state child-care regulations affect the cost and quality of child care (and hence household decisions regarding maternal labor supply) but should not have an independent influence on school meal participation. The stringency of child-care regulations for young children affects the costs of child care for younger siblings in the household and potentially proxies for after-school child-care costs for the school-aged child as well, thereby influencing mothers' decisions regarding whether and how much to work. The state-level unemployment rate and annual average weekly wage for private nonagricultural workers are available from the Bureau of Labor Statistics. State child-care regulations are obtained from Helen Blank and Nicole Poersch (2000). The labor market and child-care regulations variables correspond to the year in which the child entered the particular grade level.[10]

The analysis sample consists of students attending a public school that participates in the relevant school meal program. The ECLS-K questions regarding a school's provision of meals do not distinguish whether the school meals served are part of the SBP and NSLP or not. To avoid confounding these subsidized meal programs with private meal programs, the sample is limited to students attending public schools. Focusing on public school students reduces the sample by approximately 20 percent but circumvents the heterogeneity introduced by private schools.[11] In the ECLS-K, 85 percent of public schools participated in the breakfast program and 99 percent participated in the lunch program. The breakfast participation is somewhat higher than the national average, likely due to the focus on elementary schools.

Results

Descriptive Results

Table 1 shows the school meal participation rates in first, third, and fifth grade. Approximately 37 percent and 82 percent of children in the first

9. The authors also tested county-level labor market conditions and other state child-care regulations as instruments, but these were weak predictors of maternal labor supply.

10. There was no within-state variation in child-care regulations during this time period.

11. Private schools include religious schools (e.g., Catholic) that may serve both low- and high-income students while secular private schools likely serve primarily high-income students.

Table 1

SCHOOL MEALS PARTICIPATION BY GRADE IN PUBLIC ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

	Grade 1	Grade 3	Grade 5
Breakfast:			
Participation rate	37.38	39.23	41.90
Observations	9,640	8,160	6,700
Lunch:			
Participation rate	81.86	82.95	81.97
Observations	11,400	9,650	7,930

NOTE.—Author's calculation based on Early Childhood Longitudinal Study—Kindergarten Restricted Use First, Third, and Fifth Grade Data. All estimates are weighted. Unweighted sample sizes are rounded to nearest 10 per ECLS-K restricted-use data agreement

grade participate in the breakfast and lunch programs, respectively.[12] These participation rates are greater than those found in earlier studies such as that by Nancy Wemmerus and collegues (1996), which focused on rates among all school children rather than just elementary school children. The higher rates from the current study are consistent with the literature's finding that younger children are more likely to participate than older children. The participation rates for both breakfast and lunch are fairly constant throughout the elementary school years, although breakfast shows a slight increase each year.[13]

Table 2 shows the share of each socioeconomic and demographic group participating in breakfast only, lunch only, both programs, and neither program during the first grade. These results are consistent with prior literature. Minority membership, low income, mothers' age, low maternal education, living in a single-parent household, and number of siblings are positively associated with participation in breakfast and lunch programs. Suburban children are less likely to participate relative to children living in large or midsize cities, small towns, or rural areas. Children in the Northeast are less likely to participate relative to those living in other regions of the country. Children eligible for free and reduced meals are more likely to participate than ineligible children, although eligibility is imputed.[14] With respect to maternal work, the authors find that children of working mothers are less likely to participate in school lunch and breakfast programs than children of nonworking mothers, though working more hours (conditional on work) is associated with greater participation. The negative relationship between maternal work and school lunch

12. The cross-tabulations are weighted to account for the sampling frame.

13. When the sample is restricted to children that participated in each year of the survey, the sample is reduced significantly ($n = 5,600$ for breakfast, $n = 7,240$ for lunch), but participation rates remain similar.

14. The ECLS-K does not directly ask the parent whether the child is eligible for reduced and free meals. Therefore, the authors impute eligibility based on income and family size. However, due to a change in the survey question regarding income (from actual income in the first grade to income categories in the third and fifth grades), the imputation is more precise for the first grade.

Table 2

SCHOOL MEAL PARTICIPATION DURING FIRST GRADE BY SELECTED CHARACTERISTICS

		ROW PERCENTAGE (Total = 100)			
	% OF SAMPLE	Neither	Lunch Only	Breakfast Only	Both
Mother works	69.4	15.51	50.64	1.17	32.69
Mother does not work	30.6	14.35	45.51	1.25	38.89
White	52.9	20.01	55.39	1.17	23.43
Black	16.5	6.11	33.12	.94	59.82
Hispanic	19.8	9.71	44.57	1.68	44.04
Female	48.5	14.47	49.03	1.18	35.33
Male	51.5	15.57	48.77	1.23	34.43
Single parent	26.1	7.25	38.71	1.27	52.77
Dual parent	73.9	17.78	52.48	1.18	28.57
Maternal education:					
<High school	18.2	6.1	35.16	1.37	57.37
High school	33.5	11.39	46.76	1.54	40.31
Some college	32.1	16.08	53.37	1.06	29.49
Bachelor's or more	16.0	29.05	58.1	.79	12.07
Household income:					
≤$25,000	37.0	4.71	34.94	1.4	58.94
$25,001–$75,000	49.7	14.66	53.16	1.3	30.88
>$75,000	13.4	27.4	60.05	.86	11.69
Meal eligibility:					
Full price	46.2	23.19	58.72	1	17.08
Reduced price	15.1	10.55	48.62	1.24	39.59
Free	38.6	4.32	33.67	1.5	60.51
Urbanicity:					
Large/midsize city	39.07	13.55	47.11	1.61	37.73
Suburb/large town	35.25	19.67	52.6	.9	26.82
Small town/rural	25.68	10.92	46.48	1.02	41.57
Region:					
East	15.9	26.1	48.96	1.3	23.64
Midwest	20.9	11.54	55.72	.54	32.19
South	41.1	12.82	44.29	1.35	41.54
West	22.1	14.48	51.08	1.49	32.95
Observations*	9,350	1,450	4,700	100	3,350

* Sample size rounded to nearest 10 per Early Childhood Longitudinal Study—Kindergarten restricted-use data agreement.

is counterintuitive to the conceptual model, likely because these simple cross-tabulations do not control for heterogeneity and selection among mothers in their decision to work.

Regression Results

This section reports results from the probit and bivariate probit models estimated on pooled data from the first, third, and fifth grades.[15]

Probit results.—The authors begin by estimating single-equation probit regressions where school breakfast and school lunch participation are

15. The panel is unbalanced because of failure to participate in a particular year and attrition.

the dependent variables. The independent variable of interest is mother's work status (conditional on income and eligibility). As discussed in the conceptual model, the expected sign of this coefficient is a priori ambiguous and may differ for breakfast and lunch. Panel A of table 3 shows the single-equation probit coefficients and robust standard errors clustered at the child level. The simple probit results indicate that mother's work has a statistically significant positive association with both school breakfast and lunch participation. These results are consistent with the hypothesis that time-constrained working mothers rely on the provision of school meals to reduce their time allocated to household activities, which include meal preparation. Other coefficients in the probit models have the expected sign (see the appendix).

Bivariate probit regressions.—The single-equation probit estimates discussed above do not address the simultaneity of the work and meal participation decisions that is implicit in the theory of household behavior. They also cannot address the issues of endogeneity and selection described above. To address these issues, the authors estimate a joint model of school meal participation and maternal work with exclusion restrictions that help to identify the likely effects of work status on school meal participation (see panel B of table 3; for the full set of coefficients, see appendix tables A1 and A2).[16] The ρ estimated in the bivariate probit model provides information on the correlation between unobservables that influence children's meal participation and maternal work. It is statistically significant and positive in the school breakfast model suggesting that unobservables that increase the likelihood of maternal work also increase the likelihood of school breakfast participation. However, ρ is negative and statistically insignificant in the school lunch model. The identifying variable, state unemployment rate, is a strong predictor of maternal work with an F-statistic that exceeds 10.

In these specifications, maternal work now has a statistically significant positive association with lunch participation but a negative association with breakfast participation. Calculations estimating marginal effects suggest that maternal work decreases the likelihood of breakfast participation by 23 percentage points and increases the likelihood of lunch participation by 18 percentage points. While these magnitudes appear large, they are plausible considering that the meal participation decision is dichotomous and that the median working mother in the sample works 40 hours per week, or a full-time schedule. The time constraints associated with full-time work may lead some mothers to outsource lunches to

16. The authors also estimated a trivariate probit model for the school lunch, school breakfast, and mother's work decisions jointly. The results were very similar to those obtained from the separate bivariate probits for breakfast and lunch, (results available upon request). Given the similarities in the findings and the fact that the trivariate probit models are computationally intensive and take a long time to converge, the main results and sensitivity analyses use the bivariate probit specifications.

Table 3

EFFECTS OF MATERNAL WORK ON SCHOOL MEAL PARTICIPATION AND EATING BREAKFAST WITH FAMILY

	1		2		3	
	School Breakfast Participation	Mother's Work Status	School Lunch Participation	Mother's Work Status	Eat Breakfast with Family[a]	Mother's Work Status
A. Single-equation probit estimates:						
Mother works	.095**		.176**		−.230**	
	(.024)		(.027)		(.022)	
B. Bivariate probit estimates:						
Mother works	−.724**		.740*		.584*	
	(.252)		(.372)		(.243)	
State unemployment rate		−.084**		−.102**		−.082**
		(.025)		(.031)		(.024)
ρ	.524**		−.339		−.513**	
	(.188)		(.231)		(.166)	
F-statistic for IV		11.20**		11.12**		11.80**
Observations	23,500	23,500	23,500	23,500	23,460	23,460

NOTE.—Values in the table are regression coefficients with robust standard errors (in parentheses) clustered at child level for estimates in panel A and clustered at state level for estimates in panel B. Regressions include all covariates listed in table 2, as well as a constant and an indicator for missing data on mother's education. The authors also include detailed controls for household income using 12 indicator variables. IV = instrumental variables.

[a] Indicator variable for whether child ate breakfast with the family at least 3 times per week.

+ Significant at 10%.

* Significant at 5%.

** Significant at 1%.

school. At the same time, these time constraints may create scheduling conflicts with the timing of school breakfast, which may contribute to lower participation (along with other potential factors such as the stigma and child-quality concerns described above). Indeed, the timing of school breakfast is a statistically significant predictor of participation (Bartfeld and Kim 2010). Overall, these results suggest that mothers may use school lunch programs, but not school breakfast programs, to alleviate time constraints.[17] Although the magnitude and statistical significance varies, the pattern of positive associations between maternal work and school lunch and negative associations between maternal work and school breakfast remain consistent in a variety of alternate models including (1) child fixed-effect (linear) models without instruments, (2) conditional logit without instruments, and (3) two-stage least squares (results available upon request). However, a growing literature suggests that bivariate probit models are superior to these alternatives when estimating the effects of a dummy endogeneous regressor on a dichotomous outcome (Wooldridge 2002; Bhattacharya, Goldman, and McCaffrey 2006; Marra and Radice 2011).

As discussed earlier, one potential explanation for the differing estimated effects of maternal work on school breakfast versus lunch participation may be the fact that breakfast alone offers the opportunity to spend quality-enhancing time with children. Alternatively, it may be the case that scheduling conflicts or stigma limits the effect of maternal work on school breakfast participation. The natural question that follows is whether these children are eating a brown-bag breakfast at school, eating breakfast at home with their family, or skipping breakfast entirely. Unfortunately, the ECLS-K survey does not ask about all of these alternate choices explicitly. However, the survey does ask parents how often at least some of the family eats breakfast together. The third column of table 3 reports results from a model that estimates the same bivariate probit for whether at least some of the child's family typically eats breakfast together jointly with mother's work.[18] The authors find that when mothers work, their families are more likely to eat breakfast together. Unfortunately, the question does not explicitly identify mothers as one of the family members eating breakfast with their children but is likely to do so in single-parent families. Interacting maternal work with single-parent status shows that the estimated effect on breakfast together is the same among single mothers as mothers in two-parent households (results discussed

17. In alternate models, controls for income and free or reduced-price meal eligibility are excluded (results available upon request). The coefficient on maternal employment in these models would encompass the income effect as well as the time effect as described in our conceptual model. The effect of maternal employment on school lunch and breakfast participation is very similar to our main result, suggesting that time effects are the primary mechanism through which mother's work affects children's school meal participation.

18. The authors define "typically" as three or more times in a week. But in alternate specifications, the variable is dichotomized based on whether the family ate breakfast together at least 1, 2, 4, 5, and 6 times a week. The results remained qualitatively similar.

below). While not conclusive, the combination of school breakfast and family breakfast findings provides intriguing evidence that working mothers do not appear to rely on school breakfast programs to alleviate time constraints. They appear to take advantage of the opportunity, available at breakfast but not lunch, to eat breakfast with their children, though their motivation may be the stigma associated with school breakfast programs, scheduling conflicts between work and school breakfast hours, or an effort to increase child quality.

Robustness Checks

This section examines the robustness of the main findings by considering alternate specifications of work, controls for father's work, sensitivity to choice of instrument, and additional covariates to control for state-specific heterogeneity.[19] First, the authors examine whether the results are sensitive to the specification of maternal work by estimating part-time and full-time work separately using a joint probit-ordered probit model. Coefficients reported in panel A of table 4 use 20 hours as the cutoff to define part-time work, although using 30 or 40 hours as the cutoff yields similar results (available upon request). The magnitude of the associations between maternal work and school meal participation is intuitively larger for those children whose mothers work full time versus those whose mothers work part time.

Next, the results in panel B of table 4 control for father's work hours by including indicators for full-time, part-time, not working, and no father in the household. The results from models including paternal work are qualitatively similar to the main bivariate results reported above (panel B of table 3), though coefficients on mothers' work are now only statistically significant at traditional levels for breakfast.[20] The robustness of the results to the inclusion of father's work status is consistent with the Bureau of Labor Statistics' tabulation of the ATUS data. The ATUS data suggest that fathers spend much less time than mothers on these tasks and that their level of involvement does not vary substantially based on whether the mother works (Bureau of Labor Statistics 2006).

Then, panel C of table 4 examines the sensitivity of the findings to the exclusion restrictions. The main models, which are estimated with only

19. Additional sensitivity analyses were also conducted and are available upon request. (i) The authors controlled for variables measuring timing and location where school breakfast is served as in Bartfeld and Kim (2010). While the coefficients are qualitatively similar, they are no longer statistically significant likely due, at least in part, to the substantial reduction in our sample size resulting from nonresponse in grades 3 and 5 and the exclusion of these questions in the first-grade survey. (ii) Controlling for free and reduced-price meal eligibility in the school in both the breakfast and lunch models yielded similar results.

20. While including father's work is potentially interesting, the authors caution that father's work is potentially endogenous and so without instruments for father's work these regression estimates may be biased. Hence the preferred models exclude father's work.

Table 4

ESTIMATES OF MATERNAL WORK COEFFICIENTS FROM ALTERNATE MODELS

	School Breakfast Participation	School Lunch Participation
A. Using categorical measure of maternal work:		
Part time (0 < hours/week ≤20)	−.493**	.251+
	(.071)	(.146)
Full time (hours/week >20)	−.863**	.792*
	(.214)	(.387)
B. Controlling for father's work status	−.663*	.584
	(.271)	(.387)
C. Multiple exclusion restrictions:		
State unemployment rate; maximum child-to-staff ratio	−.701**	.901**
	(.261)	(.307)
State unemployment rate, max. child-to-staff ratio, annual average weekly wage of private, nonagricultural worker	−.734*	1.124**
	(.293)	(.277)
D. Additional state level controls:		
School lunch participation rate, AFDC benefit level, food stamp participation rate	−.772**	.296
	(.196)	(.447)

NOTE.—The values in the table are regression coefficients with robust standard errors clustered at state level in parentheses. All models include the full set of covariates included in the main regressions in table 3. AFDC = Aid to Families with Dependent Children.

+ Significant at 10%.

* Significant at 5%.

** Significant at 1%.

the unemployment rate as an instrument, provide an *F*-statistic above 10. The authors reestimate the main model by iteratively adding state child-care regulations and average weekly wages as exclusion restrictions. This test is similar in spirit to a formal overidentification test. The instruments remain strong predictors of maternal labor supply with joint *F*-statistics still exceeding 10. And the resulting estimates do not differ statistically from the main results.

Finally, the authors reestimate models with additional state-level covariates to address any remaining within-region, across-state heterogeneity that can undermine estimates based on cross-sectional variation. These variables include the state's school lunch participation rate, food stamp participation rate, and Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) benefit level, which control for unobserved differences across states in the take-up rate for free and reduced-price meals (e.g., resulting from factors such as the certification process), differences across states in preferences for public assistance, and generosity in public provision of services, respectively. Including these covariates does not alter the study's findings (see panel D of table 4). Moreover, the opposite signs on the maternal work coefficients for school breakfast versus lunch participation already provide an implicit robustness check for our results. State-level

unobserved heterogeneity is likely to influence breakfast and lunch participation in similar ways, yet the coefficients on maternal work have opposite signs for school lunch versus school breakfast participation. Therefore, it is unlikely that the estimates are biased due to state-specific heterogeneity.

Heterogeneous Effects by Household Characteristics

The main findings appear to be robust, but it is nevertheless reasonable to consider that the effects may differ across families based on their socioeconomic characteristics. In particular, the effect on school meal participation may differ if families face differential time constraints. Therefore, the study examines whether the relationships between maternal work and school meal participation vary by single parent status, number of siblings in the household, maternal education, and welfare status (table 5).

Panels A and B of table 5 report results from bivariate probit (BVP) models that interact mother's work with single-parent status and an indicator for the presence of two or more siblings in the household, respectively.[21] There is a similar pattern of results across all subgroups: mother's work is estimated to increase school lunch participation but decrease school breakfast participation. Moreover, the estimated decrease in school breakfast participation is accompanied by an estimated increase in the likelihood of the family eating breakfast together at home. The interactions between mother's work and these socioeconomic characteristics are generally not statistically significant. The exception is among single-parent households, for which the negative estimated effect on school breakfast was larger in magnitude, relative to two-parent households, even though there were no differences in the probability of eating breakfast together with the family.[22] This finding may initially seem somewhat surprising because one might expect single-parent families to be more pressed for time and therefore more reliant on school meals. However, this finding is consistent with single parents (especially those who are working) facing greater time constraints with respect to getting their children to school in time for the breakfast program. The results are also consistent with these children eating breakfast at home by themselves and even skipping breakfast, though the authors are unable to test these possibilities explicitly with the data used in this study.

Panel C of table 5 reports results for interactions of maternal work with maternal education. Among more educated mothers, the estimated neg-

21. The mean number of siblings is 1.6, so the authors chose to dichotomize based on whether the children had 2 or more siblings. In all the interaction models, the authors include two instruments to address endogeneity of the work variable as well as its interaction with the socioeconomic measure.

22. Table 5 reports the coefficient estimates. Given the nonlinear models, the authors also confirmed the sign and significance of the marginal effects following Norton, Wang, and Ai (2004).

Table 5

EFFECTS OF MATERNAL WORK BY SELECTED FAMILY CHARACTERISTICS

	School Breakfast Participation	School Lunch Participation	Eat Breakfast with Family[a]
A. Effects by family type:			
Mother works	−.675**	.678+	.593**
	(.231)	(.371)	(.211)
Mother works × single-parent family	−.183**	−.124	.087
	(.044)	(.080)	(.056)
B. Effects by sibship size:			
Mother works	−.824**	.700	.664**
	(.256)	(.443)	(.229)
Mother works × child has 2 or more siblings	.070	.017	−.061
	(.050)	(.060)	(.038)
C. Effects by maternal education:			
Mother works	−.610+	.694*	.533+
	(.331)	(.338)	(.294)
Mother works × mother has some college education or more	.091+	.179**	.008
	(.052)	(.056)	(.039)
D. Effects by welfare status:			
Mother works	−.596*	.744*	.445+
	(.250)	(.372)	(.235)
Mother works × family received welfare benefits in the past 12 months	−.139*	−.175*	.157**
	(.062)	(.089)	(.048)

NOTE.—Estimates are from bivariate probit models that include interactions between maternal work and family characteristics and use state unemployment rate and maximum child-to-staff ratio as exclusions. All other covariates from the main models in table 3 are also included here. Values in parentheses are robust standard errors clustered at the state level.

[a] Indicator variable for whether child ate breakfast with the family at least 3 times per week.

+ Significant at 10%.

* Significant at 5%.

** Significant at 1%.

ative association of maternal work with school breakfast participation is only marginally weaker than among less educated mothers, but the estimated positive association with lunch is significantly larger among more educated mothers. Given that breakfast participation is positively linked with nutrition, while lunch participation is associated with obesity (see Millimet et al. 2010), these results suggest another potential explanation for the literature's findings of larger effects of maternal work on obesity among the children of more educated mothers (Anderson et al. 2003; Fertig et al. 2009).

Finally, panel D of table 5 reports results for interactions of maternal work with welfare status. The results document that the negative relationship between maternal work and breakfast participation is relatively larger among welfare mothers compared to nonwelfare mothers. And

the positive relationship between maternal work and lunch participation is relatively smaller among welfare mothers. Again, these results are consistent with the idea that working mothers on welfare face significant time constraints and may not be able to get their children to school in time for breakfast. The lunch results may simply reflect the fact that participation is already high among welfare children, therefore, any additional increase in the likelihood of participation due to maternal work is likely to be smaller relative to nonwelfare families.

Conclusions

Increases in mothers' market work must come at the expense of time spent in other activities that contribute to the overall well-being of household members. One potential consequence of increased time constraints is that working mothers may outsource certain time-consuming activities. Time constraints have nutritional consequences because female labor force participation and changing family structure are linked to greater reliance on prepared foods (Cawley and Liu 2012) and consequently obesity (Crepinsek and Burstein 2004; Sturm 2004). Indeed, surveys document considerable declines in household work (Bianchi 2000) and meal preparation time (Cutler et al. 2003), alongside increases in consumption of meals prepared away from home (Kant and Graubard 2004). School meals represent a convenient, nutritionally regulated, and inexpensive outsourcing alternative to brown-bag meals that working mothers may use to alleviate their time constraints.

The authors model maternal work and the school meal program participation decisions jointly and estimate the relationship between maternal work and school breakfast and lunch participation, conditional on household income and free and reduced-price school meal eligibility. Therefore, the estimates of the maternal work effect capture the time effect on school meal participation. School lunch and breakfast participation are estimated separately to allow for different predictions from economic theory about the likely consequences of maternal labor supply. The results suggest that while mother's work statistically significantly increases school lunch participation, it statistically significantly reduces participation in school breakfast. The estimates are robust across a number of specification checks. That the estimates are larger among children of women engaged in full-time versus part-time work further suggests that time allocation decisions motivate these behaviors. The greater participation in school lunch programs among the children of working mothers is consistent with these households facing significant time constraints, particularly with respect to meal preparation.

The breakfast result, however, raises concerns about where children are eating breakfast if not at school. Potential hypotheses include that working mothers may choose to provide breakfast for their children at

home because they want to spend quality-enhancing time with their children in the morning (which they cannot do at lunch), they have scheduling conflicts between work and school breakfast hours, or they have concerns regarding the stigma associated with school breakfast programs. Alternately, working mothers may have less time to oversee their children's eating habits, resulting in an increased likelihood of skipping meals. To differentiate these potential explanations, the authors examine whether maternal work influences how often at least some of the family eats breakfast together. Maternal work has a positive association with this outcome, even among single-parent households where the mother is more likely to be among the participants than in two-parent families. While the authors cannot differentiate among the underlying motivations described above, these results suggest that working mothers rely on school meals for their children's lunch needs but forgo school breakfast programs. The results also show that the relationship between maternal work and school meal participation and between maternal work and the probability that the family eats breakfast together are qualitatively similar across a variety of demographic characteristics. However, the magnitudes of the estimates vary by maternal education, welfare status, and single-parent status, highlighting the differential time constraints faced by these subgroups.

This article makes several contributions to the existing literature. It is the first to examine whether maternal work increases the likelihood that children eat meals prepared at school using models that address simultaneity and selection concerns, by jointly estimating maternal work and school meal participation using instrumental variables techniques. A causal relationship between maternal work and school meal participation may have implications for children's nutrition and health, including BMI. Clearly, any potential benefits or losses in nutrition and health depend on the nutritional value of school meals with respect to the available alternatives (e.g., skipping meals, fast food, or home-prepared meals). The findings also provide interesting insight into household time allocation decisions, especially the trade-offs between school breakfast and lunch participation. In particular, findings suggest that working mothers rely more on school lunch programs than breakfast programs as a means to alleviate time constraints.

From a policy perspective, these findings can inform improvements to the design of school meal programs by recognizing the needs of working mothers and their children. Depending on the nutritional value of these meals relative to alternatives, maternal work may have consequences for children's nutrition and health. Recent studies suggest that while school breakfast participation may improve children's nutritional intake, participation in school lunches may be linked to obesity. The finding that maternal work decreases the likelihood of school breakfast but increases the likelihood of lunch participation suggests that school meal participation

may contribute to the link between maternal work and childhood obesity. More broadly, the results also suggest that policies that promote maternal labor supply (e.g., TANF, the Family and Medical Leave Act [FMLA]) may indirectly affect children's health-related outcomes by influencing decisions regarding participation in school meal programs. Future research could quantify the amount of parental time-savings that school meal programs facilitate and how this extra time is redistributed within households.

Appendix

Table A1

SINGLE-EQUATION PROBIT REGRESSION ESTIMATES

	School Breakfast	School Lunch	Eat Breakfast with Family[a]
Mother works	.095**	.176**	−.230**
	(.024)	(.027)	(.022)
Grade 3	.106**	.076**	−.161**
	(.020)	(.023)	(.019)
Grade 5	.219**	.106**	−.429**
	(.023)	(.026)	(.021)
Female	−.046*	−.01	−.01
	(.023)	(.025)	(.020)
Black	.540**	.320**	−.336**
	(.035)	(.044)	(.033)
Hispanic	.265**	.222**	−.219**
	(.034)	(.039)	(.030)
Other race/ethnicity	.166**	.146**	−.05
	(.039)	(.042)	(.035)
Mother's education:			
≥High school	−.182**	−.084+	.100**
	(.035)	(.046)	(.032)
Some college	−.275**	−.180**	.233**
	(.036)	(.046)	(.033)
≥Bachelor's degree	−.449**	−.347**	.473**
	(.046)	(.052)	(.041)
Mother's age	−.062**	−.045**	.015+
	(.011)	(.013)	(.009)
Mother's age squared	.001**	.000**	−.000+
	(.000)	(.000)	(.000)
Household income:			
$5,001–$10,000	−.035	.162	−.064
	(.072]	(.108]	(.065]
$10,001–$15,000	−.137*	.1	−.118*
	(.066]	(.098]	(.060]
$15,001–$20,000	−.221**	−.049	−.086
	(.067]	(.095]	(.060]
$20,001–$25,000	−.320**	−.029	−.029
	(.068]	(.098]	(.062]
$25,001–$30,000	−.388**	−.095	−.021
	(.071]	(.101]	(.065]
$30,001–$35,000	−.459**	−.236*	−.006
	(.079]	(.108]	(.073]

Table A1 (*Continued*)

	School Breakfast	School Lunch	Eat Breakfast with Family[a]
$35,001–$40,000	−.562**	−.284*	.068
	(.083]	(.114]	(.077]
$40,001–$50,000	−.661**	−.353**	.078
	(.088]	(.117]	(.080]
$50,001–$75,000	−.809**	−.362**	.232**
	(.091]	(.119]	(.082]
$75,001–$100,000	−.989**	−.479**	.296**
	(.097)	(.121)	(.086)
$100,001–$200,000	−1.075**	−.474**	.326**
	(.103)	(.124)	(.090)
>$200,000	−1.436**	−.701**	.467**
	(.155)	(.139)	(.116)
Single parent family	.123**	.105**	.073**
	(.029)	(.036)	(.027)
No. of siblings	.111**	.060**	.077**
	(.011)	(.013)	(.009)
Meal eligibility:			
Reduced price	.121**	.116*	.043
	(.042)	(.049)	(.040)
Free	.280**	.238**	−.015
	(.058)	(.075)	(.055)
Region:			
Midwest	.156**	.412**	−.002
	(.040)	(.040)	(.034)
South	.409**	.304**	−.071*
	(.035)	(.035)	(.030)
West	.096*	.166**	.062+
	(.040)	(.040)	(.034)
Suburb	−.022	.023	0
	(.027)	(.029)	(.000)
Town	.352**	.377**	−.041+
	(.031)	(.035)	(.024)
No.	23,500	23,500	23,460

NOTE.—Reference categories are first grade, white, maternal education less than high school, household income less than $5,000 a year, eligible for full-price meals, northeast, and rural.

[a] Indicator variable for whether child ate breakfast with the family at least 3 times per week.

+ Significant at 10%.

* Significant at 5%.

** Significant at 1%.

Table A2

BIVARIATE PROBIT REGRESSION ESTIMATES

	MODEL 1		MODEL 2		MODEL 3	
	School Breakfast	Mother Works	School Lunch	Mother Works	Eat Breakfast with Family[a]	Mother Works
Mother works	−.724		.740*		.584*	
	(.252)		(.372)		(.243)	
Grade 3	.111**	.016	.066+	.007	−.169**	.025
	(.026)	(.022)	(.037)	(.026)	(.024)	(.022)
Grade 5	.232**	.225**	.087*	.244**	−.431**	.224**
	(.031)	(.030)	(.042)	(.033)	(.021)	(.028)
Female	−.048*	−.023	−.007	−.019	−.003	−.021
	(.023)	(.017)	(.025)	(.018)	(.020)	(.018)
Black	.582**	.353**	.272**	.350**	−.395**	.359**
	(.075)	(.038)	(.076)	(.038)	(.059)	(.039)
Hispanic	.255**	.091**	.209*	.089**	−.218**	.090**
	(.071)	(.035)	(.086)	(.034)	(.055)	(.034)
Other race-ethnicity	.153	.097	.129	.093	−.065	.097
	(.100)	(.065)	(.080)	(.063)	(.055)	(.064)
Mother's education:						
≥High school	−.089*	.240**	−.132+	0.243**	.02	.243**
	(.038)	(.038)	(.070)	(0.037)	(.053)	(.038)
Some college	−.164**	.305**	−.240**	0.304**	.127*	.306**
	(.054)	(.036)	(.079)	(0.035)	(.061)	(.036)
≥Bachelor's degree	−.297**	.491**	−.428**	0.486**	.322**	.487**
	(.069)	(.061)	(.072)	(0.060)	(.076)	(.060)
Mother's age	−.031+	.106**	−.062**	0.106**	−.011	.106**
	(.016)	(.012)	(.016)	(0.012)	(.012)	(.012)
Mother's age squared	0	−.002**	.001**	−0.002**	0	−.002**
	(.000)	(.000)	(.000)	(.000)	(.000)	(.000)
Household income:						
$5,001–$10,000	.084	.388**	.082	.387**	−.160+	.393**
	(.080)	(.077)	(.103)	(.078)	(.084)	(.078)

Table A2 (*Continued*)

	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3	
	School Breakfast	Mother Works	School Lunch	Mother Works	Eat Breakfast with Family[a]	Mother Works
$10,001–$15,000	.077	.665**	−.02	.670**	−.296**	.677**
	(.103)	(.075)	(.129)	(.076)	(.103)	(.077)
$15,001–$20,000	.063	.889**	−.211	.894**	−.328**	.896**
	(.113)	(.078)	(.130)	(.079)	(.120)	(.079)
$20,001–$25,000	−.039	.892**	.896**	−.267*	−.194+	.900**
	(.104)	(.071)	(.116)	(.072)	(.131)	(.072)
$25,001–$30,000	−.069	.989**	−.275*	.995**	−.284*	.993**
	(.135)	(.080)	(.121)	(.081)	(.127)	(.082)
$30,001–$35,000	−.117	1.060**	−.430**	1.062**	−.298+	1.068**
	(.128)	(.087)	(.127)	(.090)	(.152)	(.092)
$35,001–$40,000	−.211	1.063**	−.484**	1.058**	−.229	1.076**
	(.142)	(.078)	(.131)	(.078)	(.145)	(.078)
$40,001–$50,000	−.299*	1.066**	−.543**	1.053**	−.231	1.070**
	(.150)	(.090)	(.139)	(.091)	(.161)	(.094)
$50,001–$75,000	−.414*	1.170**	−.570**	1.158**	−.11	1.170**
	(.166)	(.097)	(.142)	(.100)	(.166)	(.100)
$75,001–$100,000	−.595**	1.166**	−.686**	1.155**	−.045	1.161**
	(.170)	(.108)	(.144)	(.111)	(.166)	(.109)
$100,001–$200,000	−.684**	1.041**	−.658**	1.036**	.002	1.052**
	(.169)	(.100)	(.145)	(.103)	(.158)	(.104)
>$200,000	−1.192**	.364**	−.752**	.362**	.310*	.361**
	(.203)	(.113)	(.103)	(.115)	(.143)	(.115)

Single parent family	.216**	.418**	.037	.425**	−.034	.423**
	(.038)	(.032)	(.053)	(.033)	(.041)	(.033)
No. of siblings	.074**	−.118**	.079**	−.119**	.103**	−.119**
	(.016)	(.017)	(.018)	(.018)	(.018)	(.018)
Meal eligibility:						
Reduced price	.084^{+}	−.167**	.129**	−.174**	.07	−.175**
	(.048)	(.046)	(.039)	(.045)	(.046)	(.047)
Free	.213**	−.216**	.252**	−.222**	.031	−.220**
	(.077)	(.060)	(.079)	(.060)	(.069)	(.061)
Midwest	.148	.009	.391**	−.004	−.017	.031
	(.100)	(.041)	(.140)	(.045)	(.041)	(.040)
South	.369**	−.072^{+}	.311**	−.071^{+}	−.048	−.076^{+}
	(.100)	(.041)	(.063)	(.041)	(.041)	(.040)
West	.072	−.028	.180*	−.012	.077^{+}	−.026
	(.078)	(.055)	(.091)	(.052)	(.041)	(.055)
Suburb	−.043	−.063^{+}	.033	−.063^{+}	−.022	−.059
	(.052)	(.038)	(.049)	(.038)	(.035)	(.040)
Town	.335**	.063	.358**	.06	−.033	.054
	(.085)	(.052)	(.060)	(.052)	(.051)	(.051)
		−.084**		−.102**		−.082**
State unemployment rate		(.025)		(.031)		(.024)
F-statistic for IV		11.20; $p < .01$		11.12; $p < .01$		11.80; $p < .01$
ρ		.524** (.188)		−.339 (.231)		−.513** (.166)
No.	23,500	23,500	23,500	23,500	23,460	23,460

NOTE.—Reference categories are first grade, white, maternal education less than high school, household income less than $5000 a year, eligible for full-price meals, northeast, and rural.

[a] Indicator variable for whether child ate breakfast with the family at least 3 times per week.

$^{+}$ Significant at 10%.

* Significant at 5%.

** Significant at 1%.

Note

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Client Perceptions of Welfare Caseworker Support and Client Mental Health: Longitudinal Evidence from the Welfare, Children, and Families Project

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Although some research suggests that welfare caseworker support may improve the mental health of clients, the evidence is largely cross-sectional. Building on previous research, this study uses survey data from the Welfare, Children, and Families Project, a sample of 380 low-income women with children living in Boston, Chicago, and San Antonio, to predict psychological distress over 2 years (1999 and 2001) with a multi-item measure of perceived welfare caseworker support and a host of relevant background variables. The longitudinal change score analysis indicates that women who report improvements in caseworker support tend to exhibit fewer symptoms of psychological distress from baseline to follow-up. These results persist with controls for initial levels of psychological distress, and they confirm previous cross-sectional work, emphasizing the importance of the nature of the caseworker-client relationship.

Does support provided by welfare caseworkers improve the mental health of clients? To date, very little empirical research addresses this question.

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Nevertheless, a recent study by Terrence Hill and Daphne Cain (forthcoming) shows that low-income urban women with children who perceive their welfare caseworkers to be interested, caring, and helpful tend to exhibit lower levels of psychological distress than do women without such support. Hill and Cain (forthcoming) argue that the supportive functions of welfare caseworkers can have a powerful effect on the psychological well-being of clients. Such functions include interpreting and executing state-level Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) policies, providing services, making referrals, assessing and monitoring compliance, and, perhaps most importantly, imposing sanctions and terminating services.

Because Hill and Cain employ a cross-sectional design, they cannot establish the causal order of the association between caseworker support and client mental health. Although they propose that perceived caseworker support protects against psychological distress, it could also shape perceptions of caseworker support in the first place; women could rate their caseworker relations more favorably simply because they are healthier and happier. With this possibility in mind, this study attempts to examine the association between caseworker support and client mental health over time and to control for initial mental health status.

Building on the work of Hill and Cain (forthcoming), the authors use longitudinal survey data collected from a sample of low-income urban women with children to examine the association between perceived welfare caseworker support and levels of psychological distress over 2 years. The longitudinal analysis predicts changes in psychological distress with a multi-item measure of perceived welfare caseworker support and a host of relevant background variables, including initial levels of psychological distress. Based on previous work, the authors expect that higher levels of caseworker support will predict lower levels of psychological distress among clients.

Methods

Sample

The data for this investigation come from the Welfare, Children, and Families project (WCF; see http://www.jhu.edu/~welfare/). The WCF project is a household-based, stratified random sample of 2,402 low-income women living in low-income neighborhoods in Boston, Chicago, and San Antonio. The WCF project first sampled census blocks (or neighborhoods) with at least 20 percent of residents below the federal poverty line based on the 1990 census. Within these neighborhoods, the study sampled households with incomes below 200 percent of the poverty line, with an oversample of households below 100 percent of the poverty line. Because one of the goals of the WCF project was to assess the effect of welfare policy and work

on children, the project staff screened households for the presence of children. WCF sampled households with at least one infant or child (ages 0–4) or young adolescent (ages 10–14), and it interviewed the children's caregivers, all women, face-to-face.

The WCF project collected data in 1999, with a follow-up in 2001. The baseline response rate was 75 percent, and 89 percent of the original sample participated in the follow-up interview. The present analysis is limited to respondents who reported having welfare caseworkers. In 1999, approximately 853 respondents reported having welfare caseworkers, but the longitudinal analysis only includes those respondents who reported having welfare caseworkers in 1999 and 2001 ($n = 380$).

Measures

The authors measure psychological distress as the mean response to 18 items with the Brief Symptom Inventory (BSI-18; Derogatis 2000), which contains subscales for depression, anxiety, and somatization. For example, the survey asked respondents to indicate how much in the past 7 days they were distressed or bothered by "feeling no interest in things," "feeling tense or keyed up," and "nausea or upset stomach." Responses to all psychological distress items were coded (1) not at all, (2) a little bit, (3) moderately, (4) quite a bit, or (5) extremely, so that higher scores would indicate greater psychological distress. Previous research demonstrates the adequate validity and reliability of the BSI-18 (Derogatis 2000), and more recent analyses of low-income urban women show construct validity through associations with social support, self-esteem, heavy drinking, intimate partner violence, and self-rated health (e.g., Hill and Angel 2005; Hill, Ross, and Angel 2005; Hill et al. 2010). In the present study, the Cronbach's alpha coefficient of reliability is excellent ($\alpha = .94$).

This study measures perceived caseworker support as the mean response to three items that asked respondents to indicate how much they agreed or disagreed with the following statements about their welfare caseworker: "My welfare caseworker is interested in my well-being"; "My caseworker only wants what's best for me and [child or children]"; and "My caseworker gives me good advice and helps me decide on a plan that suits my needs." Responses to all caseworker support items are coded so that higher scores indicate higher levels of perceived caseworker support: (0) strongly disagree, (1) disagree, (2) neither agree nor disagree, (3) agree, or (4) strongly agree.

The multivariate analysis includes controls for several background variables, including client's age (in years), race or ethnicity (dummy variables for non-Hispanic white, Mexican, and other Hispanic compared with black), education (in years), employment status (worked for pay in the past week coded as one, and otherwise as zero), marital status (married-living with spouse coded as one, and otherwise as zero), and number of

Table 1

DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS (Welfare, Children, and Families 1999, 2001)

	Range	%	Mean	SD	α
Psychological distress (1999)	1 to 4.61		1.49	.61	.94
Distress change (2001−1999)	−2.50 to 2.50		.01	.52	
Caseworker support (1999)	0 to 4		2.13	1.25	.91
Support change (2001−1999)	−4.00 to 4.00		.02	1.47	
Age	18–74		32.40	10.72	
Non-Hispanic white	0, 1	9.00			
Non-Hispanic black	0, 1	49.00			
Mexican-American	0, 1	19.00			
Other Hispanic	0, 1	23.00			
Education	0–14		10.32	2.22	
Currently employed	0, 1	19.00			
Married, spouse in house	0, 1	5.00			
Number of children	1–6		2.80	1.42	
Boston	0, 1	34.00			
Chicago	0, 1	42.00			
San Antonio	0, 1	24.00			

NOTE.—$n = 380$.

children (1 to 6 or more, top-coded continuous variable). The authors selected these background variables because they are known correlates of mental health (Mirowsky and Ross 2003). Moreover, caseworkers may treat their clients differently on the basis of these characteristics. The analysis also controls for client's city of residence (dummy variables for Boston and San Antonio compared with Chicago) to account for potential variations in welfare systems and psychological distress across the three cities.

Statistical Procedures

Table 1 presents descriptive statistics. The table includes minimum and maximum values, means, standard deviations, and alpha reliability estimates for all study variables. Table 2 presents ordinary least squares (OLS) estimates from the longitudinal regression of psychological distress. Because research on two-wave panel designs suggests that change score models are generally preferable to lagged endogenous dependent variable models (Johnson 2005), the authors model changes in psychological distress over the 2-year study period.

The authors first computed change scores by subtracting baseline (1999) measures from follow-up (2001) measures (i.e., 2001−1999). Negative change scores indicate lower values (e.g., fewer symptoms of psychological distress) in 2001 than in 1999. Positive change scores suggest higher values in 2001 than in 1999 (e.g., improvements in perceived caseworker support). A change score of zero indicates no change across waves. For example, if a baseline (1999) distress score of 5 is subtracted

Table 2

OLS Regression of Changes in Psychological Distress
(Welfare, Children, and Families 1999, 2001)

	Distress Change (2001−1999)		
	b	SE	*β*
Caseworker support (1999)	−.046	.027	−.106
Support change (2001−1999)	−.046	.023	−.126*
Psychological distress (1999)	−.282	.044	−.319***
Age	.001	.002	.018
Non-Hispanic white	−.076	.098	−.042
Mexican-American	.019	.088	.014
Other Hispanic	−.127	.077	−.103
Education	.010	.013	.044
Currently employed	−.111	.080	−.071
Married, spouse in house	−.144	.121	−.058
Number of children	−.002	.019	−.004
Boston	.159	.069	.143*
San Antonio	.059	.074	.048
Model *F*			4.282***
R^2			

Note.—$n = 380$. Shown are unstandardized ordinary least squares (OLS) coefficients (b), standard errors (SE), and standardized coefficients (β).

* $p < .05$ (two-tailed test).

*** $p < .001$ (two-tailed test).

from a follow-up distress score of 4, the resulting distress change score is equal to −1 (i.e., 4 − 5 = −1). This negative value indicates fewer symptoms of psychological distress in 2001 than in 1999.

The data in table 2 predict changes in psychological distress (from 1999 to 2001) with perceived caseworker support at baseline and changes in perceived support, while adjusting for baseline psychological distress and background variables. This analysis is unique and important because it allows the authors to (1) directly test whether changes in perceived support (e.g., improvements in support from baseline to follow-up) are associated with changes in psychological distress (e.g., fewer symptoms from baseline to follow-up) and (2) control for baseline psychological distress.

Attrition Analysis

Since the study considers changes in outcomes over time, sample attrition is a potential bias, the primary concern being whether or not there are any systematic changes in the sample across waves. To formally assess this issue, the authors estimated a binary logistic regression model predicting the odds of sample attrition (i.e., the loss of respondents from the analytic sample from baseline to follow-up). The dependent variable in this case is dummy-coded, giving respondents who completed questionnaires for both waves a value of zero and those who completed only the

wave 1 questionnaire a value of one ($n = 473$). The independent variables include baseline psychological distress, perceived caseworker support, and all background variables.

The results of this analysis suggest that attrition is higher among Mexican-Americans than non-Hispanic blacks (OR [odds ratio] = 1.77, $p < .05$), as well as higher among the employed than the unemployed (OR = 1.86, $p < .01$). There is also some evidence to suggest that education is positively associated with the odds of attrition (OR = 1.08, $p < .05$). The odds of attrition are lower among older respondents than younger respondents (OR = 0.99, $p < .05$) and those with higher levels of psychological distress than those with lower levels of distress (OR = .78, $p < .05$). However, since the authors adjust for these factors in the regression models, attrition is unlikely to bias the regression coefficients (Winship and Radbill 1994). The authors emphasize that perceived caseworker support is not associated with the odds of attrition (OR = .95, $p > .10$), implying that respondents who reported lower levels of caseworker support are neither more nor less likely to drop out of the study than those reporting higher levels.

Results

The results presented in table 1 indicate that the average respondent exhibits low levels of psychological distress and moderate levels of perceived caseworker support. There are minute average increases in the change scores for psychological distress and perceived caseworker support over the study period.

Table 2 presents the longitudinal analysis. First, these results show that perceived caseworker support at baseline is unrelated to measured changes in psychological distress, suggesting that women who perceived their welfare caseworkers to be less interested, caring, and helpful in 1999 did not experience an increase in distress over the study period compared to those whose workers reportedly were less interested, caring, and helpful. Second, the results indicate that the change score for caseworker support is statistically significant and that positive changes in perceived support may be associated with negative changes in psychological distress, net of baseline psychological distress, and background variables. This implies that women who report higher levels of caseworker support in 2001 than in 1999 (indicating improvement in support) tend to exhibit fewer symptoms of psychological distress from baseline to follow-up than women reporting lower levels of support over time. Together these patterns suggest a relatively short-term (less than 2 years) effect of perceived caseworker support on the mental health of low-income urban women with children. Finally, respondents with higher levels of psychological distress at baseline tend to report fewer symptoms of psychological distress

over the study period, while Boston residents tend to report increases in distress compared to Chicago residents.

Discussion

At the heart of the client-caseworker relationship is the latter's interest in, care of, and helpfulness toward the client; Julie Altman (2008) refers to these qualities as supportiveness, empathy, and reliability. Although some research (Hill and Cain [forthcoming]) suggests that welfare caseworker support may improve the mental health of clients, the evidence is largely cross-sectional. Building on previous work, this study uses longitudinal survey data collected from a sample of low-income urban women with children to examine the association between perceived welfare caseworker support and levels of psychological distress over 2 years.

The longitudinal change score analysis indicates that women who report improvements in caseworker support also tend to exhibit fewer symptoms of psychological distress from baseline to follow-up. Although the authors acknowledge that psychological distress could shape perceptions of caseworker support in the first place, the longitudinal results persist with controls for baseline psychological distress.

Implications for Practice

Welfare recipients tend to view caseworkers as powerful actors who exert considerable control over their lives and benefits (Anderson 2001). Recipients consistently emphasize the importance of strong and positive interpersonal relations with their caseworkers, along with caseworker accessibility and substantive competence regarding eligibility, services, and sanctions.

Under TANF, welfare caseworkers are responsible for interpreting complex policies and regulations, providing comprehensive information to recipients regarding eligibility and noncompliance regulations, as well as individualized assessments to maximize utilization effectiveness. However, inadequate training and structural and organizational barriers to service delivery can undermine the supportive functions of welfare caseworkers (Meyers, Glaser, and MacDonald 1998). To improve these conditions, Melissa Radey (2008) recommends that social work education and training be prioritized for welfare caseworkers.

Currently, there is modest job-related preparation and little in the way of on-site training or ancillary support for welfare caseworkers (Annie E. Casey Foundation 2003). The baccalaureate social work (BSW) curriculum is designed in part to train frontline social workers to perform jobs analogous to frontline welfare caseworkers (Council on Social Work Education 2010). But the results from this study suggest that, beyond welfare

caseworkers, all frontline social workers could benefit from professional social work skill building, since education and training programs designed to enhance the supportive functions of caseworkers could be extremely important to the mental health of clients. These skills might include active listening, rapport-building, and problem-solving skill development.

Former welfare recipients report that they want validation and recognition for their strengths as well as for their efforts to leave TANF for employment (Gray 2005). These former recipients report that they want their workers to focus less on compliance issues and more on encouragement to help women become wage reliant. This strengths-based approach would likely enhance clients' perceptions of caseworker support. However, to enact change at the frontline worker level, there must be changes in administration and policy that promote a strengths-based empowerment model and that will enable caseworkers to develop more positive and supportive relationships with recipients (Anderson 2001).

Limitations

The present study has several limitations. First and foremost, the measure of caseworker support is based on general self-reports at only two points in time. Although this information is useful and clearly relevant to the mental health of clients, additional research is needed to explore client-caseworker stability over time, frequency of interaction between caseworker and client, and both actual and perceived caseworker support. The authors suspect that the association between actual casework support and client mental health could be mediated or explained by perceptions of caseworker support.

In addition, the authors are unable to fully explore some of the ancillary findings. For instance, the study finds that Boston residents (compared with Chicago residents) tend to report increases in distress over time. This pattern could be explained by unobserved cultural or regional-level variations in administrative structure and policies that may influence results (e.g., caseload variations, record keeping policies and procedures, individual intake and assessment scripts with varying levels of intrusive questioning, etc.). However, these possibilities are outside the scope of the current study.

Despite the limitations of the study, the results confirm previous cross-sectional work and emphasize the importance of the nature of the caseworker-client relationship. When these relationships are supportive, they contribute to the psychological well-being of clients. But when these relationships are characterized by a lack of support, they are associated with greater psychological distress. Welfare caseworkers must appreciate these outcomes and pay special attention to the quality of their relationships with their clients. Increased symptoms of psychological distress, in-

cluding, for example, anxiety and depression, can only serve to undermine the obvious goal of helping clients through difficult periods of socioeconomic instability.

Note

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Falling Further Behind? Child Support Arrears and Fathers' Labor Force Participation

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This study examines how child support arrears affect fathers' labor force participation. It relies on longitudinal data from the Fragile Families and Child Well-Being Study. Findings from analyses of these data suggest that child support arrears result in declines in average weeks worked in the formal labor market in subsequent time periods. These findings are driven by the behaviors of fathers who had relatively high amounts of arrears and no income in the previous year and are mostly robust to tests for selection into no work or low levels of work by fathers. Findings also suggest that arrears obligations that are low relative to income result in increases in the probability that fathers engage in any formal work. Arrears are not statistically significantly related to informal labor force participation. This study highlights both intended and unintended consequences of the growth in arrears under current child support enforcement policies.

In recent years, the accumulation of arrears in the nation's child support enforcement (CSE) system has received increased attention. From the inception of the Office of Child Support Enforcement (OCSE) in 1975 to 2010, arrears, defined as unpaid child support owed to custodial parents, grew to over $110 billion. And although in 2010 the OCSE collected and distributed approximately $7 billion of these arrears, 11.3 million child support cases still had arrears due (OCSE 2011). In perhaps the most comprehensive review of child support arrears, Elaine Sorensen, Lilian Sousa, and Simon Schaner (2007) examine arrears in nine large states. They find that the growth of arrears is driven largely by three factors: the accu-

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mulation of interest on outstanding arrears, nonpayment on existing orders by obligors with little or no income, and low payment rates on existing arrears. They also find that in each of the nine study states, approximately 10 percent of obligors, many of whom have little or no reported income, owe over half of the arrears. Finally, in regard to the ultimate collectability of arrears, simulations run by the authors suggest that only 40 percent of current arrears will be collected in the next 10 years, mostly due to the accrual of arrears by noncustodial fathers with little ability to pay (Sorensen et al. 2007).

Sorensen and colleagues (2007) suggest that large child support arrears are damaging for many reasons: they represent losses to custodial families who could benefit from child support, they involve a loss of funds owed to the government, and they portray the CSE system as ineffective. However, the authors neglect to mention another major possible consequence of arrears: their impact on the labor force participation (LFP) of noncustodial obligors. In the last 20 years of the twentieth century, there was a secular decline in male LFP that was particularly pronounced among low-income men, who tend to be young, less-educated men of color. This is also the group responsible for a disproportionate share of the arrears that accumulated in the CSE system during the same period. For example, between 1979 and 2000, the labor force participation rate of 16- to 24-year-old men with a high school diploma or less and who were not enrolled in any postsecondary education continued to decline, even though the US economy experienced its two longest periods of economic expansion (1982–1990 and 1992–2000) during this time. Declines were especially pronounced among black men. Employment population ratios also declined during this period, and particularly for these groups (Holzer, Offner, and Sorenson 2005). An inverse relationship between the accumulation of arrears and the LFP of this increasingly disadvantaged group would be problematic because it would reinforce an already negative employment trend for this group. Furthermore, reductions in LFP would compound the accumulation of arrears, making it less likely that child support debt will ever be resolved.

Though previous studies find little evidence that child support obligations reduce employment among these populations (Freedman and Waldfogel 1998; Holzer et al. 2005), no study yet explores the consequences of arrears for fathers' LFP. Thus, this article examines the extent to which child support arrears affect noncustodial fathers' formal and informal LFP. The study relies upon data from the Fragile Families and Child Wellbeing Study, a longitudinal birth cohort study, in which young, less-educated black and Latino men are oversampled (Reichman et al. 2001).

Child Support Enforcement Processes and the Accumulation of Arrears

Arrears occur at the final stages of an orderly process through which the government assigns and collects financial support for children from their nonresident parents. This process would not be exceptional if not for the overrepresentation in the child support system of low-income men, who are responsible for staggering amounts of accumulated arrears. For couples who divorce or legally separate, this process usually begins with a child support order. The order is one of the principal outcomes of the court proceedings and establishes a legal obligation for the noncustodial parent (NCP), usually the father, to provide financial support for the child or children until the age of maturity. To establish the right amount of child support, the courts require information about the father's (and in some cases also the mother's) income. If the father refuses to provide this information voluntarily, the mother or her attorney can obtain this information via subpoena (Roberts 1994).

In order to set child support order, federal law requires states to use guidelines that are based on estimates of the cost of child rearing. Although states may choose among three different guideline formulas, each requires low-income NCPs to pay a higher portion of their income in child support than middle- and high-income NCPs (Sorensen 1999; Huang, Mincy, and Garfinkel 2005). To limit costs to low-income fathers, most states make adjustments to their child support guidelines at the lower end of the distribution of NCP income. However, these adjustments must balance the NCP's ability to pay against the needs of the child. Some states achieve this balance by establishing a minimum order below which child support orders do not fall, whatever the NCP's income. This approach may yet result in a child support order that exceeds the father's ability to pay, which increases defaults and causes arrears (Sorensen 1999; Pearson 2004; Primus 2006). Other states establish a self-support reserve that is proportional to the poverty line for a single person. If the difference between the self-support reserve and the unadjusted guideline amount is positive, the child support order is set proportional to that difference. Otherwise, the child support order is set to $0 or to a very low value (e.g., $25). While this approach avoids a child support order that would impoverish NCPs, it is likely to provide an inadequate standard of living for the child, impose a heavy burden on the custodial parent, or require the custodial parent to use public benefits such as Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) or the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program. In either case, once the child support order is established, the NCP is directed to pay the required amount usually in monthly or biweekly installments. Thus, a child support order is established first, and arrears do not accrue unless the NCP fails to pay the required amount afterward.

In most cases, the NCP's employer is directed to deduct the required amount from the NCP's paycheck and forward it directly to the OCSE. This procedure, called automatic wage withholding, has been in place since 1984 (US House of Representatives 2008) and is used to collect child support on behalf of children who receive public assistance and custodial parents who request assistance from a CSE agency in collecting their child support. Thus, defaults on child support orders are rare for stably employed NCPs (Bartfeld and Meyer 2003). Even if stably employed NCPs experience layoffs, child support payments are automatically deducted from unemployment insurance (UI) benefits (US House of Representatives 2008), although a lag may occur between job separations and the receipt of UI benefits.

On the other hand, self-employed NCPs or NCPs who work less than full time and full year (hereafter, underemployed) can experience repeated defaults on their child support orders, resulting in arrears. If they do not resolve these arrears quickly, CSE agencies add an amount intended to pay down arrears to the regular installment payments. Together, installment payments on the NCP's regular child support order and arrears can total up to 65 percent of the NCP's income (US House of Representatives 2008). Furthermore, most states assess penalties and interest on arrears, so once self-employed or underemployed NCPs begin to fall behind, the amount owed can accumulate rapidly. Thus, one reason that low-income men account for a disproportionate share of arrears is that they also tend to be underemployed (Lerman 2010; Rich 2001).

The circumstances under which low-income men tend to become nonresident fathers also lead to large arrears. A low-income man usually becomes a nonresident father after he discontinues his relationship with his unmarried partner. Alternatively, he may marry and have a child or children, but his marriage may dissolve without a divorce or formal separation. Although both mothers and fathers in these circumstances may initially prefer informal support to a formal child support order, over time the fathers' informal contributions usually decline. When this occurs, the mother will likely eventually petition the courts for a child support order, or a child support agency may do so after the mother applies for public benefits (Folbre and England 2002; Nepomnyaschy and Garfinkel 2007, 2010). Under these circumstances the courts may decide that the father has a legal obligation to support his child or children even before the amount of the child support order is determined. After the amount is determined, the court uses it to establish a current order and a retroactive order to cover the period back to the birth of the child, the date that the married (or cohabiting) parents separated, or the date of the petition for paternity (or child support) was brought before the court. Further, the court may add court, birthing, and administrative costs (for genetic testing and other services related to the child support case) to the child support order. Since the court proceedings that establish the initial child sup-

port and retroactive orders in such cases may not conclude until the child is several years old, the NCP may already have substantial child support debt when he begins paying child support. If the NCP is unable to satisfy this full amount by the first installment, arrears begin to accumulate.

Finally, courts must have information about the NCP's income to establish a child support order, but this information is much less likely to be available when the child support order is not the result of a divorce or separation proceeding. Unmarried fathers and fathers who end their marital unions without a divorce or legal separation often do not respond to letters from CSE agencies or court summonses to establish legal paternity or child support (Johnson, Levine, and Dolittle 1999). When the NCP simply does not respond, the courts issue a default child support order, and many state laws require the court or CSE agency to set the order assuming that the NCP is capable of earning what a worker would earn if he earned the minimum wage and worked full time and full year.

However, this may well exceed the income of NCPs who are unemployed, underemployed, or out of the labor force despite wanting to work. Segments of the population with such limited work income have grown substantially since the recession beginning in December 2007, especially among black, Hispanic, young adult, and less-educated workers (Sum and Khatiwada 2010). When the NCP does respond but is currently unemployed or underemployed, many state laws direct the courts or CSE agencies to set the order assuming the NCP is capable of earning what he earned in his last full-time and full-year job. NCPs may subsequently petition the court for a downward modification of orders that exceed their ability to pay, but such petitions usually require an attorney, take months to resolve, and require NCPs to miss days of work in order to attend modification hearings. This discourages many NCPs from applying for downward modifications. Those who do apply pay what they can while waiting for the court to rule on their petition, but arrears accrue all the while.

Theoretical and Empirical Evidence

Microeconomic theory provides evidence regarding the potential relationship between arrears and fathers' LFP. Using the theory of consumer choice, the potential consequences of arrears for labor supply can be derived by treating arrears as an addition to the tax that the CSE system imposes on wages. The theory assumes that the consumer spends all his or her income on leisure and other goods. The consumer has a fixed amount of time, and every unit of time spent working increases his or her income but leaves less time for leisure. Wages therefore represent the opportunity cost, or the price, of leisure. Child support operates like a tax on wages for those NCPs who, like most, pay their child support through automatic wage withholding. Besides the amount withheld from the paycheck to meet the current child support order, an additional amount is

withheld to pay off arrears. Then, NCPs with arrears face higher taxes on wages than NCPs without arrears. This means that the cost of leisure is lower for the former. If two NCPs are otherwise identical, the lower cost of leisure induces the NCP with arrears to buy fewer goods and more leisure. As a result of this substitution effect, the NCP with arrears also spends less time working than the NCP without arrears.

At the same time, the NCP with arrears perceives himself to be poorer than the NCP without arrears, because each unit of time spent working contributes less to income. Because he perceives himself to be poorer, the NCP with arrears consumes fewer goods and less leisure than the NCP without arrears, which implies that the former spends more time working than the latter. This is the income effect. Whether the NCP with arrears actually devotes more time to work than the NCP without arrears depends on whether the substitution effect or the income effect dominates. In other words, how NCPs with arrears will act is theoretically ambiguous.

Including informal work makes the analysis more complex and its results more ambiguous, because the NCP pays taxes only on his formal earnings. He pays taxes on informal earnings only if these earnings are discovered by authorities and taxed as well, or if he voluntarily reports them. As a result, there are two ways in which the NCP can adjust if the usual tax on wages arising from child support becomes higher because he also owes arrears. First, he can alter his consumption bundle by altering the mix of goods and leisure, as before. Second, he can achieve a given level of leisure by altering the mix of time spent in formal and informal work, which involves some risk taking. Frank Cowell (1985) shows that, when taking into account decisions about informal work, changes in taxes, which could represent payments on current child support or arrears, have an ambiguous effect unless restrictive assumptions are made about the way consumers derive utility from disposable income and leisure. And even with these assumptions, how changes in taxes affect labor supply depends on the relative magnitude of the substitution and income effects as before, as well as additional assumptions about risk aversion.

There is reason to believe that arrears may affect low-income NCPs more than other NCPs. For one, as described above, fathers who owe past child support may actually face a higher marginal tax rate, because they can be subject to additional wage withholding to help pay down the total amount of arrears. Moreover, for fathers with arrears more than 12 weeks old, the total percent of wages that may be withheld to cover a child support order and arrears (65 percent) is higher than the upper limit for those without arrears (60 percent). Additionally, arrears may affect LFP because low-income men have higher labor supply elasticity than other men (Juhn, Murphy, and Tophel 1991; Grogger 1997).

No previous study directly examines the possible consequences of child support arrears on either formal or informal LFP. A few studies, however, examine whether variation in state- and city-level CSE affects LFP for men.

For example, Richard B. Freeman and Jane Waldfogel (1998) find little evidence for an association between state-level CSE policies and male formal labor supply. Similarly, Lauren M. Rich, Irwin Garfinkel, and Qin Gao (2007) find no relationship between a city-level measure of CSE strictness and fathers' formal employment. However, Harry Holzer, Paul Offner, and Elaine Sorensen (2005) show that a state-level index of CSE activities is marginally associated ($p < .10$) with labor supply among black men between the ages of 25 and 34. Additionally, making the assumption that the exogenous debt associated with Medicaid birthing costs to unmarried fathers (referred to as lying-in costs) are randomly assigned (and thus might provide an unbiased estimate of the impact of child support debt), Maria Cancian, Carolyn J. Heinrich, and Yiyoon Chung (2009) find that such costs are associated with decreases in both formal earnings and child support payments.

Rich and colleagues (2007) is the only previous quantitative study to examine how the CSE system affects informal LFP. They find that stricter city-level CSE policies are associated with fewer hours of informal work by fathers. Limited contrary evidence is available from qualitative work, however. Earl Johnson, Ann Levine, and Fred Doolittle (1999) find that it is common for fathers to stop working entirely in order to avoid large withholdings for child support orders or arrears in the face of what they perceive as an unfair system. Results from the same study provide support for the notion that child support obligors may turn to informal work, drug dealing, or other illegal activity to meet their child support obligations and to ensure that their children are receiving the support they deserve (Johnson et al. 1999). In addition, summarizing the findings of a number of other qualitative studies, Maureen R. Waller and Robert Plotnick (2001) indicate that some fathers report quitting jobs when they discover the amount to be garnished from their wages, and that others shift work into the informal sector to make up for lost wages.

In summary, the results of theory and research to date provide a mixed view of the possible associations between arrears and LFP, with some indication that fathers, facing a tax imposed by the arrears they owe, might reduce both their formal and informal LFP. Because no previous study specifically examines arrears, the authors treat the relationship between arrears and LFP empirically.

There are a few notable characteristics of this study that distinguish it from previous research and should bolster its ability to detect an association between arrears and LFP should one exist. For one, arrears may be more likely to impact LFP than other child support obligations. As discussed above, arrears may have greater implications for LFP than child support obligations, particularly since the 1996 welfare reform law (US Congress 1996), which increased penalties for arrears. For instance, current law requires states to impose a number of sanctions on NCPs with

arrears. Among these, states may: withhold tax refunds and unemployment benefits; impose liens against real estate or personal property; withhold, suspend or restrict drivers' professional and occupational licenses; and deny passports when arrears exceed $2,500 (US House of Representatives 2008).

In addition, the FFCWS provides information on a group of fathers that would likely be particularly susceptible to the implications of arrears, namely, an oversample of young, unmarried, and low-income fathers (Reichman et al. 2001). Although previous research (Rich et al. 2007) uses the FFCWS, this is the first study to examine the arrears burdens of individual fathers. This is important for two reasons. First, it allows this study to make use of the individual variation in both arrears and LFP among fathers who might be overlooked in examinations of aggregated city- or state-level policy. Second, the potential consequences of arrears can be examined by calculating the amount owed in arrears relative to fathers' income. This is an important step, which the authors believe has been neglected by previous research.

Data

Data for this study come from the FFCWS (Reichman et al. 2001), a longitudinal sample of 4,898 infants and their parents, born in 20 US cities between the spring of 1998 and the fall of 2000. The FFCWS included approximately 3,675 nonmarital births that are representative of such births in American cities with populations greater than 200,000. This study uses data from the first four waves of the FFCWS, beginning at childbirth and continuing with follow-up surveys conducted when children were 1, 3, and 5 years old.

At each survey point, the FFCWS attempts to collect direct data from each of the 4,898 father and mother pairs. Fathers respond to the survey at a lower rate than mothers at each wave, but because the authors used multiple imputation of missing data (see below) to impute data for both mothers and fathers, none of the sample is lost to study attrition or to item nonresponse. However, after completing the imputation process, the authors drop the 96 fathers from the sample who were reported as deceased at any of the survey waves. The sample thus comprises all living fathers in the data set, including both nonmarried fathers, some of whom are in arrears in a given wave, and married fathers, who do not pay child support or have arrears. Consistent with previous research (e.g., Freeman and Waldfogel 1998), the authors retain the group of married fathers in part to provide a valid comparison group for those fathers with arrears. The choice to include all fathers is further motivated by the fact that between survey waves some fathers transition out of marriage into other relationship statuses, making it possible for them to have child support

orders (and thus accumulate arrears). Nearly 2 percent of the fathers who were married at the 1-year follow-up have child support arrears by the 3-year follow-up wave.

After dropping fathers who were reported as deceased, an analytic sample of 4,802 fathers is left. In the analyses, the authors pool observations on fathers' LFP at the 3- and 5-year follow-ups, resulting in a final sample of 9,604 father observations.

Measures

Outcome variables.—The authors examined fathers' LFP in the 3-year and 5-year follow-up waves of the FFCWS. At each wave, the survey asked fathers, "In the last 12 months, how many weeks did you spend at your regular jobs?" and, "When you were working at these jobs, about how many hours per week did you work?" Using responses to these two variables, the authors created continuous variables indexing the number of weeks fathers worked in the past 12 months and average hours per week typically worked in the past 12 months. They recoded each of these variables to zero if a father reports no regular earnings in the past 12 months, never having worked since his child was born, or never having worked 2 consecutive weeks. Finally, the authors created a dummy variable indicating whether a father engaged in any formal work in the past 12 months, coded as 1 if a father worked any weeks in the past 12 months, worked greater than 0 average hours per week, or had any earnings from formal employment in the past 12 months. Table 1 contains summary information on all of the main independent and dependent variables.

To calculate informal LFP, the authors also used fathers' reports at the 3-year and 5-year follow-up waves. An advantage of the FFCWS is the particularly rich information it includes on fathers' participation in the informal market. At the 3-year follow-up, the survey asked, "During the last 12 months did you: Work off the books or under the table? Work in your own business? Sell or deliver drugs, engage in prostitution, or do other kinds of hustles? Do anything else to earn money?" If fathers indicate that they engaged in any of these types of informal LFP, the survey also asked about how many weeks in the past 12 months they performed the activity and about how many hours per week they engaged in the activity in the past 12 months. In the final wave, the survey did not ask about their participation in off-the-book or under-the-table work. This change in the survey is likely responsible for the decrease in overall participation in the informal labor market between the 3-year and 5-year follow-ups reported in table 1. To account for this change between survey waves, the authors conducted sensitivity tests by excluding reports of off the book and under-the-table work from all waves. Models using this operationalization of informal LFP (available upon request) do not differ from those reported in the results below.

Table 1

Summary Statistics for Main Independent and Dependent Variables

Variable Name	Mean or Proportion	SD	Min	Max
Formal labor-force participation:				
Father worked past 12 months:				
3 year	.86	. . .	0	1
5 year	.84	. . .	0	1
Avg. hours per week:				
3 year	40.11	21.31	0	120
5 year	39.70	22.40	0	120
Avg. hours per week (if worked):				
3 year	46.82	14.69	1	120
5 year	47.43	15.27	1	120
Weeks per year:				
3 year	37.98	20.06	0	52
5 year	36.78	20.89	0	52
Weeks per year (if worked):				
3 year	44.34	13.70	1	52
5 year	43.94	14.38	1	52
Informal labor-force participation:				
Father worked past 12 months:				
3 year	.28	. . .	0	1
5 year	.19	. . .	0	1
Avg. hours per week:				
3 year	7.21	16.55	0	160
5 year	4.69	15.31	0	190
Avg. hours per week (if worked):				
3 year	25.42	22.42	1	160
5 year	24.07	27.14	1	190
Avg. weeks worked:				
3 year	1.34	3.59	0	39
5 year	1.35	4.16	0	37.33
Avg. weeks worked (if worked):				
3 year	4.73	5.42	.25	39
5 year	6.94	7.06	.33	37.33
Arrears variables:				
Father in arrears 1 year	.05	. . .	0	1
Father in arrears 3 year	.11	. . .	0	1
All formal income:				
1 year	33,587.6	71,277.45	0	3,111,638
3 year	30,338.8	33,232.46	0	246,251.8
Ratio of arrears to income 1 year:[a]				
No arrears (omitted; proportion is .95)	0	. . .	0	0
>0 and ≤.50 (proportion is .03)	2,181.19	3,219.56	.01	19,700.15
>.50 and ≤1.00 (proportion is .004)	10,750.10	7,378.49	.57	19,700.15
>1.00 and no income (proportion is .008)	5257.40	6211.46	2.03	19,700.15
>1.00 and any income (proportion is .006)	10,595.48	7462.96	315.29	19,700.15
Ratio of arrears to income 3 year:				
No arrears (omitted; proportion is .86)	0	. . .	0	0
>0 and ≤.50 (proportion is .07)	3,018.33	3,237.33	1.23	30,812.26
>.50 and ≤1.00 (proportion is .01)	6,114.10	5,027.77	421.18	30,812.26
>1.00 and no income (proportion is .03)	4,440.71	4,684.19	5.75	30,812.26
>1.00 and any income (proportion is .03)	8,582.68	8,114.14	237.02	30,812.26

Note.—Min = minimum; Max = Maximum; SD = standard deviation; avg. = average.

[a] Mean, SD, Min, and Max refer to the amount of arrears in dollars for each category of the ratio of arrears to income. All dollar figures are presented in 2010 constant dollars.

Based on the responses to these questions, the authors created three variables to index informal LFP, which mirror those variables used to represent formal LFP. The first is a dichotomous variable coded as 1 if fathers report participating in any of these activities and zero otherwise. The second is a variable measuring the average number of weeks fathers spent working in all types of informal LFP in the past 12 months. The last variable indicates the average number of hours per week fathers spent in the past 12 months in all types of informal LFP.

Treatment variables.—The authors specify two child support arrears variables. Because questions on arrears are not asked of fathers at each survey point, both measures rely primarily on mothers' reports. Mothers did not report on child support orders or arrears if they are married to the focal child's father, although mothers cohabiting with fathers report whether a child support order is established and whether a father owes arrears. At the 1-year, 3-year, and 5-year follow-ups, the survey asked mothers, "Does [the father of the focal child] have any arrears that he is supposed to pay to you, or does he owe anything to the welfare department for unpaid monthly support or for reimbursing birthing costs?" If mothers responded "yes," the survey further asked them to provide the dollar amount of the arrears.

A mother's report of a father's child support arrears is almost certainly an imperfect proxy. At issue is mothers' ability to accurately report the amount of arrears owed by fathers. For example, it may be the case that in states where child support payments due to TANF recipients are intercepted and not passed through families, mothers may wrongly believe that fathers are not providing any support. However, this possibility may have minimal implications for reporting, as federal law (Section 454(5) of the Social Security Act) and regulation (Federal Regulation 45 CFR 302.54) require that states notify mothers at least quarterly of the amount of support provided by fathers (John Langrock, personal communication, October 8, 2010). Conversely, mothers may undercount the amount of arrears, because they may not have knowledge of arrears that fathers owed for children with different mothers. Although the FFCWS collects this information from mothers, this study does not include it because of its likely limited accuracy and because not all of the survey waves included it.

Nonetheless, the overall credibility of mothers' reports of arrears is strengthened by several factors. First and foremost, mothers' reports from the biannual Child Support Supplement of the Current Population Survey serve as the basis for national estimates of child support compliance. Thus, while the FFCWS data on child support arrears may be biased, any bias attending to mothers' reports is already characteristic of the major source of information on child support receipt. Second, relying on mothers' reports of arrears may actually minimize some bias in the treatment variables, as mothers might be less likely than fathers to misrepresent the presence or dollar amount of arrears. Finally, as a basic

check on the validity of this measure, the authors regressed a measure of the dollar amount of arrears reported by mothers on the measure of the city-level strictness of child support. As expected, the measure is statistically significantly and positively associated with city-level child support strictness.

Beginning with mothers' responses to the two questions on child support arrears, the authors calculated two variables to index fathers' arrears. First, a simple dichotomous variable indicates whether the focal child's father owes arrears on the child support he was supposed to pay the mother or whether he owes the welfare department for unpaid support or birthing costs. Hereafter, this article refers to both types of unpaid support as "arrears" or "child support arrears." Second, the authors include a variable that measures the ratio of the dollar amount of child support arrears at each survey point to fathers' reports of their income in the 12 months before the survey (both in 2010 constant dollars). Preferring to rely on actual data when possible, in rare instances where mothers report that fathers of focal children are in arrears but nevertheless fail to report the dollar amount the fathers owe, the authors substitute fathers' reports of the dollar amount of arrears if available: the study recoded five cases in this way at the 1-year follow-up, and three cases at the 3-year follow-up.

Including the second variable rather than one measuring the simple dollar amount of arrears owed by fathers is important for two reasons. First and foremost, child support award amounts, and thus arrearages, may exceed the ability of such fathers to pay, so it may be the amount of arrears relative to income that matters for fathers' LFP. For example, fathers whose earnings are high may be able to better absorb the additional cost of arrears, whereas fathers with low earnings may not. Thus, as expected, early models (not shown) that included only a measure of the dollar amount of arrears as a treatment variable find no association with LFP. Indeed, although no previous study examines whether the ratio of a child support order amount to income is associated with LFP, research demonstrates a link between order-to-income ratio and child support compliance (Meyer 1999; Bartfield and Meyer 2003; Huang et al. 2005). Whereas ideally this study would examine the marginal tax imposed by arrears, in the absence of such data, the ratio of arrears-to-income indexes a similar construct. Second, a review of pertinent research suggests that the overall accumulation of arrears is driven by a group of low-income fathers with particularly large amounts of arrearages, making the use of a ratio of arrears-to-income directly relevant to policy.

The authors calculate a ratio of the amount a father owed in arrears in each wave to his report of the dollar amount of his formal income sources from the preceding 12 months. Thus, the measure of income in the denominator includes earnings from all formal employment, income from cash welfare such as the TANF program, the monetary value of food

stamps, and the value of other assistance such as unemployment insurance or worker's compensation.

To ensure a valid arrears ratio value for each father, the authors recode the denominator of this ratio to a value of "1" if fathers report no income in the previous year. Further, to allow for a nonlinear association between the arrears ratio variable and fathers' LFP and lacking guidance from previous literature, the authors recoded the ratio variable into five categories, both to contextualize the variable and to capture the policy environment relevant to child support arrears. First, all fathers with no arrears comprise one category, the omitted comparison group in all analyses. There are four additional groups as follows: fathers with arrears greater than zero but less than or equal to 50 percent of their income (hereafter referred to as a relatively low arrears burden); fathers with arrears greater than 50 percent of their income but less than or equal to 100 percent of their income (hereafter a moderate arrears burden); fathers with arrears greater than 100 percent of their income, who reported no income from any source in the past 12 months (for whom we assigned an income of $1 to calculate a valid ratio, hereafter a high arrears burden with no income); and fathers with arrears greater than 100 percent of their income who reported some income in the past 12 months (hereafter a high arrears burden with some income). Among fathers with arrears greater than 100 percent of their income, the authors distinguish between those with no income and those with any income for two reasons. First, as noted above, previous research (Sorensen et al. 2007) demonstrates that the vast amount of arrears that accumulated in the CSE system accrue to fathers with low or no income, making the group of fathers with high arrears and no incomes in the FFCWS data set of direct importance to policy. Second, splitting this group of fathers in this way acknowledges that there may substantively different processes contributing to high arrears burdens.

Although the study retains these categories of the arrears-to-income ratio as the preferred operationalization, the authors explored whether the results reported below are sensitive to alternative choices about operationalization. Supplementary analyses (available upon request), which use various different cut points, or use quartiles to establish categories, arrived at results that are almost identical in meaning and significance.

Covariates.—The authors used a large number of covariates to control for omitted and confounding effects. Based on the temporal ordering of the modeling approach, described below, controls are measured at baseline or the 1-year follow-up. Table 2 provides summary information for all model covariates.

First, the analyses include a set of covariates typically controlled for in standard earnings equations, such as fathers' self-report of age in years and age in years squared, fathers' race and ethnic group (non-Hispanic white, non-Hispanic black, Hispanic, and other), fathers' education in four cat-

Table 2

SUMMARY STATISTICS FOR CONTROL VARIABLES

Variable Name	Mean or Proportion	SD	Min	Max
Time invariant controls:[a]				
Father's race or ethnicity:				
Black not Hispanic	.49	. . .	0	1
White not Hispanic	.19	. . .	0	1
Hispanic	.28	. . .	0	1
Other	.04	. . .	0	1
Father US born	.81	. . .	0	1
Father's name on birth certificate	.95	. . .	0	1
Father suggested abortion	.12	. . .	0	1
Father WAIS[a] score	6.43	2.78	0	16.52
Father's father's NCS[a] score	.71	1.13	0	6
Father's mother's NCS[a] score	.56	1.03	0	6
Time varying controls:				
Less than high school:				
Baseline	.33	. . .	0	1
1 year	.31	. . .	0	1
High school:				
Baseline	.36	. . .	0	1
1 year	.35	. . .	0	1
Some college:				
Baseline	.21	. . .	0	1
1 year	.22	. . .	0	1
College:				
Baseline	.10	. . .	0	1
1 year	.11	. . .	0	1
Father's age:				
Baseline	27.86	7.23	12	80
1 year	29.16	7.23	13	81
Job training:				
Baseline	.41	. . .	0	1
1 year	.47	. . .	0	1
Father in jail:				
Baseline	.04	. . .	0	1
1 year	.08	. . .	0	1
Father attends religious services regularly:				
Baseline	.53	. . .	0	1
1 year	.45	. . .	0	1
Number of children:				
Baseline	2.14	1.44	1	18
1 year	2.45	1.58	1	12
Father's depression:				
Baseline	.03	1.03	−.92	4.96
1 year	.05	1.07	−.30	4.75
Father has child(ren) with other woman:				
Baseline	.33	. . .	0	1
3 year	.39	. . .	0	1
Other controls:				
Unemployment rate[a]	.05	.02	.03	.10
Strictness of local CSE system[a]	1.06	.26	.64	1.59

NOTE.—SD = standard deviation; Min = minimum; Max = maximum; WAIS = Wechsler Adult Intelligence Scale–Revised; NCS = National Comorbidity Survey; CSE = child-support enforcement.

[a] Measured at baseline.

egories (less than high school, high school degree, some college, college degree, or higher), whether the father was born in the United States, and whether the father received any additional job-related training.[1]

The authors also control for other characteristics of fathers that might plausibly account for a relationship between arrears and the study's dependent variables. These include some time-invariant characteristics such as intelligence (measured by a subset of questions from the Wechsler Adult Intelligence Scale–Revised [WAIS-R]), the mental health of the father's father and father's mother (measured at the 3-year follow-up by a scale from the National Comorbidity Survey), whether the father suggested an abortion of the focal child, and whether the father's name is on the birth certificate of the child. In addition, this study controls for time-varying characteristics of fathers, including variables based on reports by both mothers and fathers regarding whether the father was incarcerated at a given survey point, fathers' self-reports of their total number of children, and the frequency they attended religious services.[2]

The set of time-varying controls also includes a measure of fathers' depression and a variable indicating whether fathers have children with other mothers (multiple-partner fertility [MPF]). The first and second waves measured fathers' depression differently. At childbirth, the FFCWS measures depression according to a shortened version of the Center for Epidemiological Studies Depression scale (CES-D; Radloff 1977). At the 1-year follow-up, the survey measures fathers' depression according to the Composite International Diagnostic Interview–Short Form (CIDI-SF; Kessler et al. 1998). In order to ensure that these two measures are comparable, the authors create standardized depression variables (mean = 0, standard deviation = 1) at each time point. The FFCWS only measures MPF at the 1-year and 3-year follow-ups. Despite the fact that this variable is contemporaneous to the treatment variable, following previous research (Mincy, Hill, and Sinkewicz 2009), this study includes this variable in both of the overall temporal models rather than risk omitted variable bias as a consequence of excluding it.

Three variables measured at baseline aim to index the overall economic and policy climate in each of the 20 survey cities. The first of these is the citywide unemployment rate. The second is a variable constructed by Lenna Nepomnyaschy and Irwin Garfinkel (2010) assessing the strictness of the CSE in each city. Using census data, the variable is a "ratio of the proportion of mothers receiving child support to the predicted

1. Although previous studies (Card 1999) show that the inclusion of a cubic age term helps to correct for underprediction of earnings in young workers, cubic terms are not significant in any models and hence dropped from the analyses.

2. Although the FFCWS includes this composite variable of current incarceration, there are no data available regarding the amount of time fathers were incarcerated. Thus, there was no reasonable way to determine whether fathers' incarceration precluded them from participating in formal or informal labor markets. As a consequence, the authors chose to include all fathers independent of their incarceration histories.

probability of receiving child support in a given city . . . adjusted for a number of individual- and city- level characteristics" (350) that would likely be associated with receipt of child support. The last variable measures the year that a child was born to assess any year-specific factors that might be related to both child support compliance and LFP.

Multiple Imputation and Missing Data

The authors use multiple imputation (MI) to deal with missing data (Rubin 1987; Schafer 1997). With MI, values for missing data were imputed based on multivariate prediction algorithms. These algorithms were used to create 10 complete data sets, each of which is based on different prediction equations and thus incorporates sampling variability for every variable with missing data. Data analysis on multiply-imputed data combines information from each imputed data set and arrives at model estimates, which account for variability among the different data sets. The MI imputation procedure for this study used the "mi" suite of commands available in the computer program STATA 12.

MI is advantageous in that it allows the authors to make use of the full sample of fathers and mothers in the FFCWS but also because of assumptions about the nature of missing survey data. The typical approach to dealing with missing data is to drop observations that are missing data for any variable included in modeling. This approach (called "complete case analysis") involves the rather strict assumption that data are missing completely at random (MCAR; Little and Rubin 2002). According to the MCAR assumption, each observation has the same probability of being missing (Gelman and Hill 2007). But missing data conditioned on any other variable violate this assumption: for example, it is often the case that low-income respondents are less likely than others to respond. Instead, MI assumes that data are missing at random (MAR), a more likely assumption that suggests that data are missing conditioned only on available information (Gelman and Hill 2007).

In general, the analysis imputes data at the highest rate for those variables based on fathers' reports, in part because not all fathers participated in the baseline survey. Thus fathers are also more likely than mothers to be missing at subsequent survey waves. For instance, the study imputes data on formal and informal LFP for about 35 percent of fathers at the 3-year and 5-year follow-ups but lacks data on arrears (based on mothers' reports) for only approximately 15 percent of cases at the 1-year and 3-year follow-ups.

Although no objective post hoc test of the multiple imputation procedure is possible, the study follows the advice of Kobi Abayomi, Andrew Gelman, and Marc Levy (2008), who recommend assessing the differences between the imputed and nonimputed distributions of each variable to flag cases in which there are extreme departures. For all vari-

ables included in this study's analyses, there are no such extreme departures, and all imputed distributions matched with the authors' a priori expectations.

Analytic Strategy

The authors took a number of steps to address possible limitations of the data and analyses, which might otherwise limit the causal interpretation of the study's findings. First, reverse causality is of major concern to the analyses: a cross-sectional model might suggest that arrears decrease LFP, when in fact decreases in LFP may cause increases in fathers' unpaid child support. To address this concern, the authors used the longitudinal data of the FFCWS data to estimate multivariate logistic and ordinary least squares regressions examining lagged associations between child support arrears and fathers' labor force outcomes. Additionally, to avoid the potential bias that might accompany the inclusion of covariates that occur posttreatment (Mincy et al. 2009), the authors included all control variables lagged an additional survey wave.[3]

One approach might be to pool data and model the relationship between arrears and LFP as in equation (1):

$$\text{LFP}^{it} = \alpha + \beta^1\text{arrears}^{it-1} + \beta^2\boldsymbol{X}^{it-2} + \beta^3\boldsymbol{Z}^{i} + \beta^4\text{wave}^{it} + e^{it}, \qquad (1)$$

where LFP indicates any of the formal or informal LFP variables detailed above for the ith father at time t (either the 3- or 5-year follow-up), arrears stands for either a dichotomous variable indicating a father owes arrears at time $t-1$ (the 3- or 1-year follow-up) or the series of variables indicating the ratio of arrears-to-earnings at time $t-1$, $\boldsymbol{X}$ is a vector of time-varying covariates pertaining to a father at time $t-2$ (either the 1-year follow-up or baseline, excepting the measure of MPF), $\boldsymbol{Z}$ is a vector of time-invariant covariates (measured at baseline), wave is a term indexing the survey wave at which LFP is measured, and e is a father-specific error term.

A concern with equation (1) is that results might be biased if the covariate vectors, $\boldsymbol{X}$ and $\boldsymbol{Z}$, do not include all relevant confounding factors. For example, one potentially damaging unobserved factor might be a father's overall inclination or ability to work. If fathers are generally inclined not to work or toward low levels of work, this preference might account for both low levels of LFP at time t and the amount of child support

3. To avoid omitted variable bias in our estimate of the effect of arrears on LFP, our model must include other predictors of arrears, such as depression. Panel data give us the option of observing pre- or posttreatment depression. Suppose a father had arrears at time t and as a result, he had lower labor force participation at time $t+1$, but the fact that he had arrears at t also adversely affected his mental health at $t+1$. If we included depression at $t+1$ among the regressors, it would be correlated with our treatment variable, arrears at $t+1$, and as a result our estimates of the coefficient of arrears at $t+1$ would be biased. We diminish the prospects of this bias by controlling for depression (and other covariates) at $t-1$.

arrears at time $t-1$. To account for this sort of selection, an alternative approach is to specify lagged dependent variable (LDV) models of the general form found in equation (2):

$$\text{LFP}^{it} = \alpha + \beta^1\text{arrears}^{it-1} + \beta^2\boldsymbol{X}^{it-2} + \beta^3\boldsymbol{Z}^{i} + \beta^4\text{LFP}^{t-2} + \beta^5\text{wave}^{it} + e^{it}, \quad (2)$$

where LFP on the right-hand side of the equation is an earlier (lagged) measure of the dependent variable, measured at time $t-2$. In general, the inclusion of an earlier measure of the dependent variable helps account for unobserved factors that might contribute to the outcome of interest. Thus, an LDV model might account for the sort of selection into little or no work described above: if fathers have an overall tendency not to work, this tendency might be present before the measurement of arrears and thus be accounted for in the lagged term. Additionally, unlike alternate modeling strategies such as fixed-effects models, LDV models can be useful in accounting for the influence of time-variant factors such as layoffs, which occur before the study period and could plausibly account for both current LFP and arrears (Angrist and Pischke 2008).[4]

Because of its relative advantages to other models, the LDV model is the preferred analytic strategy for this study. Following direction from previous literature, analyses for equation (2) used logistic regression for models that measure LFP dichotomously and ordinary least squares (OLS) regression that measure LFP continuously (Freeman and Waldfogel 1998; Holzer et al. 2005; Rich et al. 2007). The authors are nonetheless cognizant of the potential pitfalls in using OLS to estimate models examining lower-bound censored limited dependent variables, as in the case of weeks and hours worked in labor markets. However, rather than risk the distributional assumptions necessary for the specification of alternative strategies like Heckman selection and Tobit models (Winship and Mare 1992; Angrist and Pischke 2008), the authors used OLS, which can often perform as well as these other models when examining policy data (Angrist and Pischke 2008).

For models examining dichotomous measures of formal or informal LFP, the lagged dependent term represents the number of previous waves in which a father reports working up until and inclusive of time $t-2$. For models with continuous dependent variables, the lagged dependent term is an average of weeks worked or hours per week worked in formal or informal labor markets up until and inclusive of time $t-2$. For all analyses, the cluster command in STATA 12 groups standard errors by father.

Although the LDV model helps address selection into working or not working, there are still potential concerns to address. First of all, any correlation between arrears and average hours of weekly work or the

4. Although a common method to account for selection bias, fixed-effects models rely on within-person variation to estimate causal effects (Allison 2009). Because a relatively small number of fathers change their arrears status over the study period, fixed-effects modeling is not a useful strategy in this case.

number of weeks worked might actually reflect fathers' exit from (or entry into) the formal or informal labor market as a consequence of their arrears. Thus for all analyses, the study first estimated all models examining the full sample and then again including only those fathers who engage in any formal or informal work at time *t*, in order to ensure that the estimates of the relationship between arrears and the weeks of work and average weekly hours worked are not biased by labor force entry or exit.

Second, it is possible that any prediction about arrears and fathers' LFP derived from analyses of equation (2) may still reflect selection into low levels of work or no work by fathers, independent of their previous LFP histories. As a final step, the authors undertook sensitivity analyses of the results from equation (2) by separating the sample into fathers who are firmly attached to the labor force (those working on average 35 or more hours per week and 26 or more weeks per year in the formal labor market by the time that arrears were measured) and those who are not. This step assesses whether results from equation (2) are sensitive to fathers' overall participation in the labor market. If the consequences of arrears for LFP are consistent across both marginally and firmly attached fathers, this provides evidence that estimates from equation (2) do not simply reflect selection into low levels of work, providing greater confidence in the study's estimate of the influence of arrears.

Results

Main Results

Table 3 presents the results of the LDV models. All analyses use the mim routine for analyzing multiply imputed data in STATA 12 (Royston, Carlin, and White 2009). The left and right panels of the table provide results for formal and informal LFP, respectively. The first row of the table presents estimates of the influence of the arrears indicator variable on the various formal and informal LFP variables along with the coefficient for the lagged LFP variable. Subsequent rows present results from models utilizing the arrears-to-income ratio variables.

The results reported in column 1 suggest that, on average, having any arrears does not change the odds that fathers engaged in any formal LFP. However, arrears are associated with a marginally statistically significant 1.813 week decrease in average weeks of work. When the sample is restricted to fathers who are working at time *t*, having arrears is related to a statistically significant decrease in 2.912 weeks of work. The differences between columns 2 and 4 suggest that there may be some selection into work not captured in the results in column 1 that masks an overall average decrease in weeks of work. There is no statistically significant relationship

Table 3

LAGGED DEPENDENT VARIABLE MODEL ESTIMATES OF THE EFFECTS OF ARREARS ON LABOR FORCE PARTICIPATION

	FORMAL LABOR-FORCE PARTICIPATION					INFORMAL LABOR-FORCE PARTICIPATION				
	All Fathers (n = 9,604)			Only Working Fathers (n = 8,133)		All Fathers (n = 9,604)			Only Working Fathers (n = 2,299)	
Arrears Indicator	(1) Father Worked (OR)	(2) Weeks Worked (OLS)	(3) Avg. Weekly Hours (OLS)	(4) Weeks Worked (OLS)	(5) Avg. Weekly Hours (OLS)	(6) Father Worked (OR)	(7) Weeks Worked (OLS)	(8) Avg. Weekly Hours (OLS)	(9) Weeks Worked (OLS)	(10) Avg. Weekly Hours (OLS)
Father in arrears	1.043	−1.813^{+}	.203	−2.912**	−.173	1.045	.037	−.725	−.219	−3.121
	(.145)	(.973)	(1.173)	(.867)	(.779)	(.124)	(.195)	(.726)	(.574)	(2.261)
Ratio of arrears to income:										
No arrears (omitted)	. . .	. . .	. . .	. . .	. . .	. . .	. . .	. . .	. . .	. . .
>0 and ≤.50	1.516*	.380	2.860*	−1.803^{+}	.582	1.047	.017	−.770	−.187	−3.121
	(.305)	(1.077)	(1.406)	(.995)	(1.015)	(.147)	(.225)	(.872)	(.695)	(2.486)
>.50 and ≤1.00	1.378	−1.658	.780	−4.753	−1.287	1.420	.253	1.071	−1.031	−3.577
	(.700)	(3.246)	(3.715)	(2.894)	(2.595)	(.469)	(.718)	(2.399)	(1.827)	(6.516)
>1.00 and no income	.442**	−9.475***	−9.230***	−6.333*	−2.389	.852	.101	−2.146	.727	−4.581
	(.104)	(2.105)	(2.555)	(2.562)	(2.584)	(.240)	(.446)	(1.767)	(1.540)	(5.698)
>1.00 and any income	.949	−3.275	−1.726	−4.789^{+}	−1.683	1.014	−.136	−.136	−.773	−.651
	(.366)	(3.063)	(3.046)	(2.580)	(2.451)	(.348)	(.445)	(1.784)	(1.359)	(6.483)

NOTE.—OLS = ordinary least squares; OR = odds ratio. Standard errors are in parentheses. All models control for the variables detailed above.

$^{+}$ $p < .10$.

* $p < .05$.

** $p < .01$.

*** $p < .001$.

between having arrears and the average hours of work in the full sample or among only working fathers.

The results of models predicting the relationship between the ratio of arrears-to-income and fathers' LFP are provided in the lower half of table 3. The results suggest that the dichotomous measure of arrears conceals important variation in the way that arrears may be related to fathers' formal LFP. Results reported in column 1 suggest that a low arrears burden (greater than zero but less than or equal to half of income in the past year) is statistically significantly related to a more than 50 percent increase in the odds that fathers engage in any work. Reported in columns 1, 2, and 3, results that base analyses on the full sample suggest that having a high arrears burden with no income in the past 12 months is associated with a statistically significant 56 percent decrease in the odds that fathers engage in any (reported) work and to large and statistically significant decreases in weeks of work (9.475) and average weekly hours of work (9.230). However, when the sample is restricted only to those working fathers as reported in columns 4 and 5, the magnitude of these coefficients is diminished. While the coefficient for weeks of work is statistically significant and large (−6.333), the coefficient attached to hours of work is no longer statistically significant, suggesting that overall decreased odds of work in part account for the results from columns 2 and 3.

Similarly, as reported in column 3, a relatively low arrears burden is related to statistically significant increases in average hours of work in the full sample, but as shown in column 5, this association is no longer statistically significant among the sample of only working fathers, suggesting that this relation is accounted for by the overall increased odds of any formal LFP for this group.

Unlike for formal LFP, the results for informal LFP (reported in columns 6–10 of table 3) indicate no significant associations between any measure of arrears and informal LFP. The relevant results suggest large differences in the magnitude of comparable coefficients for analyses involving the full sample and the sample of fathers working informally, reflecting the large proportion of fathers who reportedly do not engage in any such informal work. In many instances, the standard errors are many times the size of the coefficients, suggesting possible imprecision in the measurement of the various aspects of informal LFP.

Sensitivity Test Results

A sensitivity test on the main analyses consists of reestimating all LDV models first among marginally attached fathers who work part time (less than 35 hours per week) and less than half year (less than 26 weeks) and next among firmly attached fathers who work full time and more than half year on average. These analyses examine whether the study's findings are sensitive to fathers' overall participation in the labor force and

thus represent an attempt to rule out the possibility that the results from the LDV models summarized in table 3 are a consequence of overall tendency by fathers toward no or low levels of work.

Results for the sensitivity test are displayed in table 4, which is arranged like table 3. Because in previous analyses there was no statistically significant relationship between arrears and informal LFP, the sensitivity tests focus on formal LFP only. In addition, because the majority of firmly attached fathers report working (6,215 of 6,749), there is little variation in the dependent variable for results in column 6. Thus, logistic models are not feasible, and the authors substitute linear probability models for this column, and for models in column 1, to allow for comparison between firmly and marginally attached fathers. Logistic regression models for column 1 (not shown) arrive at the same conclusions as those reported in the table.

Results reported in columns 1, 2, and 3, upper panel, suggest that, for the fathers who are marginally attached to the formal labor force, having any arrears is not statistically significantly associated with any measure of formal labor force participation. However, results reported in column 1 suggest that fathers who are marginally attached to the labor force with relatively low arrears burdens are more likely to work and to work a statistically significantly higher number of hours per week than fathers in other burden categories (column 3). Results reported in the lower panel of column 5 suggest that, when the authors restrict the sample to marginally attached fathers who are working at time *t*, the coefficient attached to average hours of weekly work is close to zero and no longer statistically significantly related to the dependent variable, suggesting that the overall increased probability of work accounts for the estimated increase in hours reported in column 3. As reported in columns 1, 2, and 3, having a high arrears burden with no income is associated with a marginally statistically significant decrease in the probability of any LFP ($p < .10$), a statistically significant 6.111-week decrease in weeks of work and a marginally statistically significant decrease in average weekly hours of work. Comparable coefficients for the sample of marginally attached fathers working at time *t* are similar in direction but are not statistically significant.

Among fathers firmly attached to the labor market, the ratio of arrears-to-income is not associated with the probability that fathers work, although as noted above, there is little variation in this dependent variable for firmly attached fathers. As results reported in column 7 suggest, in the full group of fathers, arrears are associated with a marginally statistically significant decrease in weeks of work and among those working at time *t*, arrears are associated with a statistically significant 2.312 decrease in average weeks of work (column 9). Thus, among both marginally attached and firmly attached fathers, arrears are estimated to be related to statistically significant decreases of comparable magnitude in weeks of work in the past year.

Table 4

ESTIMATES OF THE EFFECTS OF ARREARS ON LABOR FORCE PARTICIPATION BY LABOR FORCE ATTACHMENT

	Fathers Who Were Marginally Attached to the Formal Labor Market					Fathers Who Were Firmly Attached to the Formal Labor Market				
	All Marginally Attached (n = 2,855)			Marginally Attached and Working at time t (n = 1,918)		All Firmly Attached (n = 6,749)			Firmly Attached and Working at time t (n = 6,215)	
Arrears Indicator	(1) Father Worked (OLS)	(2) Weeks Worked (OLS)	(3) Avg. Weekly Hours (OLS)	(4) Weeks Worked (OLS)	(5) Avg. Weekly Hours (OLS)	(6) Father Worked (OLS)	(7) Weeks Worked (OLS)	(8) Avg. Weekly Hours (OLS)	(9) Weeks Worked (OLS)	(10) Avg. Weekly Hours (OLS)
Father in arrears	.037	−.753	1.067	−3.167*	−.761	.003	−1.946^{+}	.862	−2.312*	.720
	(.032)	(1.537)	(1.709)	(1.527)	(1.277)	(.019)	(1.096)	(1.381)	(.977)	(1.002)
Ratio of arrears to income										
No arrears (omitted)	. . .	. . .	. . .	. . .	. . .	. . .	. . .	. . .	. . .	. . .
>0 and ≤.50	.144**	3.757	6.624*	−2.032	.408	.007	−1.314	1.298	−1.756^{+}	.922
	(.044)	(2.588)	(2.729)	(2.315)	(1.967)	(.021)	(1.131)	(1.503)	(1.049)	(1.161)
>50 and ≤1.00	.091	−.209	1.581	−5.030	−3.014	.013	−3.104	.550	−4.483	−.102
	(.100)	(4.852)	(5.040)	(5.368)	(3.550)	(.070)	(3.825)	(4.598)	(3.140)	(3.515)
>1.00 and no income	−.101^{+}	−6.111*	−5.142^{+}	−4.432	−1.385	−.334	−15.730	−18.311	.209	1.860
	(.051)	(2.318)	(2.676)	(2.764)	(2.562)	(.367)	(16.565)	(23.533)	(8.791)	(9.259)
>1.00 and any income	.046	−.134	.786	−3.136	−1.754	−.026	−5.783	−1.317	−5.611	−.243
	(.081)	(4.409)	(3.903)	(4.588)	(3.000)	(.077)	(4.453)	(4.737)	(3.620)	(3.677)

NOTE.—OLS = ordinary least squares. All models control for the variables detailed above.

$^{+}$ $p < .10$.

* $p < .05$.

** $p < .01$.

*** $p < .001$.

The lower half of table 4 indicates that there are no statistically significant relationships between arrears burden and any outcome of formal LFP among fathers who report being firmly attached to the labor force. This is true even for the dependent variable representing weeks of work among fathers working at time *t*, despite the statistically significant average decrease in weeks of work for this group compared to fathers with no arrears, reported at the top of column 9. Post hoc analyses suggest that the reason behind this potential discrepancy is that only a small number of fathers are firmly attached to the labor force and have moderate or high arrears burdens (either with or without income). There are fewer than 40 fathers who are firmly attached to the labor force, with high arrears burdens and any income, and fewer than 5 with high arrears burdens and reportedly no income. Thus, the small cell sizes in this portion of the table suggest that this portion of the analyses is underpowered.

Together, the results from the sensitivity test suggest that selection is not entirely responsible for the findings in table 3. If indeed the results of the main analyses are biased due to an unobserved inclination by fathers to engage in less work or no work at all, the negative associations between arrears and LFP would be restricted to marginally attached fathers. However, as noted above, there are statistically significant and negative estimated consequences on weeks of work for both firmly and marginally attached fathers. Moreover, confirming the results from column 1 of table 3 results in table 4 suggest that there is a tendency toward increased labor force participation for fathers with marginal labor force attachment and relatively low levels of arrears but an inclination toward decreased participation for marginally attached fathers with relatively high arrears and no income.

Summary and Conclusion

This article is the first to examine the potential connection between child support arrears and the formal and informal LFP of fathers. Using data from the FFCWS, and modeling strategies aimed at strengthening the causal interpretation of our results, LDV regressions estimate associations among two measures of fathers' child support arrears when children were 1 and 3 years old and formal and informal LFP when children were 3 and 5 years old.

Likely due to fundamental differences between this article and previous analyses, this study is also the first to find any connection between a facet of the CSE system and the formal LFP of fathers. Thus, it is not necessarily inconsistent with previous work that examines macrolevel implications (Freeman and Waldfogel 1998; Holzer et al. 2005; Rich et al. 2007). The current analysis is also the first to include an actual measure of child support arrears and to use data that measures the fathers' indi-

vidual involvement with both the CSE system and LFP. In addition, the ratio variable that attempts to estimate the relative burden of arrears is an important departure from previous work.

The results of the main analyses and sensitivity tests lead to a number of specific findings. First, on average, child support arrears are estimated to result in fewer weeks of work by fathers in the formal labor market. This estimated relation exists across estimates and is strongest among working fathers, for whom arrears are estimated to result in a 2.912 week decrease in weeks worked in lagged dependent variable modeling (table 3). This relation does not appear to be driven by selection into low levels of work or no work by fathers: in sensitivity analyses, arrears are, on average, statistically significantly related to a decrease of 2.312 weeks of work among fathers who are firmly attached to the labor force and to a 3.167 decrease of weeks of work among fathers who are marginally attached.

Second, the estimated consequences of child support arrears on work varies both by the relative burden of arrears to income as well as by fathers' attachment to the formal labor force. Thus, as reported in column 1 of table 3, a relatively low arrears burden is estimated to lead to a more than 50 percent increase in the odds of working compared to the odds of working for those fathers with no arrears. This relation is apparent among fathers with marginal attachment to the labor force in sensitivity tests (column 1 of table 4). Further, a relatively high arrears burden with no income is estimated to be associated with a decrease in the odds of engaging in any formal LFP (column 1 of table 3) and a decrease of more than 6 weeks of work among fathers who are employed (column 4 of table 3). To contextualize these findings, the authors note that this predicted decrease is equal to more than 14 percent of the average number of weeks of work (44.14 weeks) at the 3- and 5-year follow-ups among working fathers. Although not statistically significant at the traditional level of $p < .05$, in sensitivity tests, a similar pattern is evident among fathers with marginal attachment to the labor force.

Third, despite the fact that the study finds predicted associations between both low and high arrears burdens and average hours of work among the full sample of fathers in both tables 3 and 4, there is no statistically significant relationship between any measure of arrears burden and hours of work when samples are restricted to working fathers. This suggests that the associations between measures of arrears burden and hours of work in the full sample may reflect entry into or exit from the labor market.

Finally, despite contrary findings from some qualitative research (Waller and Plotnick 2001), this study does not find an association between any measure of arrears and entry into (or exit from) work in the informal labor market, and arrears do not appear to cause a statistically significant change in the amount of time fathers spend in informal labor activity. However, the large standard errors that accompany these esti-

mates suggest a degree of imprecision in the measurement of informal work, so the authors do not wish to overemphasize them, particularly in light of other empirical results that indicate a statistically significant association between the CSE system and informal LFP (Rich et al. 2007).

Although only speculation is possible about the meaning of this article's findings, the authors believe that the arrears-to-income ratio variable provides important insight into how arrears influence LFP in the context of the CSE policy environment. In general, the findings suggest that it is not only the burden of arrears but also the father's ability to pay that is relevant to LFP. Thus, findings suggest that when fathers owe arrears that are low relative to their income in the past year, an income effect appears to dominate, and these fathers increase the likelihood that they work, presumably to pay off arrears with greater expediency. This finding, which is present among fathers who are marginally attached to the labor force, suggests that in this case, the system of accumulating arrears works as intended, by encouraging fathers to work to address unpaid support for children. Although this study finds no comparable result among fathers who are firmly attached to the labor force, this is not entirely unexpected given that only 8 percent of firmly attached fathers reportedly are not working at time *t*.

However, the estimated consequences for LFP for fathers who owe a relatively large amount of arrears are heterogeneous. Having a relatively high arrears burden with some income is not associated with formal LFP for fathers. But having a relatively high arrears burden and no income is related to statistically significant decreases in the odds that fathers engage in any formal work and with a significant decrease of over 6 weeks of work among working fathers. Thus, for fathers with relatively high arrears burdens, a substitution effect is estimated to dominate, as fathers are estimated to decrease formal LFP in favor of other activities while fathers with any income have no labor response.

Post hoc bivariate analyses reveal further important differences between fathers with relatively high arrears burdens and no income and those with relatively high arrears and some income. Although both groups of fathers are found to work fewer weeks and fewer hours per week on average at time *t* than fathers with lower arrears burdens or fathers who are not in arrears, fathers with no income at time $t-1$ are estimated to work substantially less at the following time period and to earn less money from formal employment. For example, fathers who reportedly have relatively high arrears and some income at time $t-1$ are estimated to work 27.81 weeks, and 35.59 hours per week, and to earn just over $9,204 per year on average. On the other hand, fathers with relatively high arrears and no income are estimated to work only 17.57 weeks, 23.43 hours per week, and to earn $4,649 per year on average.

One mechanism that might account for this difference is job-hopping: fathers take jobs in more unstable portions of the labor market in which

high turnover is common (through frequent quits, layoffs, or dismissals). This might occur if fathers with high arrears who did not work in the previous time period took jobs that they quit shortly after their disposable income fell below their living expenses, because wage withholding orders (to cover current support and arrears) took effect. It is likely, in turn, that fathers who were employed in the previous time period continued employment despite possibly accumulating arrears if they were unable to meet child support obligations. Among fathers firmly attached to the labor market, the mechanism underlying the statistically significant decrease in weeks of work is less clear, as fathers across the arrears-to-income distribution in this group are found to work over 40 hours on average per week. Future research might take advantage of information on fathers' occupation as a means to unravel the heterogeneous behavioral response to arrears.

Whatever the mechanism, working fewer weeks, even among a group of marginally attached men, is likely to restrict fathers to employers with a high tolerance for employee turnover. Such employers are unlikely to provide training that leads to the accumulation of specific human capital, which in turn might lead to higher earnings. Such employers are also unlikely to offer much in the way of fringe benefits to their employees. Finally, such low levels of work likely disqualify fathers with high arrears from receiving unemployment insurance, a much-needed protection for workers who are likely to experience frequent unemployment spells.

Though the sections below address the limitations of this study more completely, an import caveat about the sensitivity analyses used in this study is in order here. Because there are no statistically significant relationships between any of the arrears burden categories and LFP in the sample of fathers who are firmly attached to the labor force, the authors cannot entirely rule out the possibility of selection into low levels of work or no work as responsible for the negative and significant relationships between a relatively high arrears burden with no income and formal LFP reported in table 3. However, confidence in the validity of the results is strengthened by the fact that fathers with relatively low levels of arrears who are marginally attached to the labor force are estimated to be more likely to engage in any formal work, which would be unexpected if there is an overall tendency toward limited or no employment for this group. Further, and more importantly, the average negative estimated effect of having any arrears is evident among fathers who are marginally attached and firmly attached to the labor force. Because of the small number of fathers who are firmly attached to the labor force and who have relatively high arrears burdens (either with or without any income), the analyses used to generate the findings in the bottom right-hand side of table 4 are not sufficiently powered and thus are not sensitive enough to accurately distinguish the real pattern of relationships. Further studies, which include older children, and therefore more fathers with arrears, will be in-

strumental in helping to definitively establish the causal relationship between arrears and LFP.

The findings have important policy implications. First, it appears that the accumulation of arrears has differing implications for fathers' LFP, dependent on the relative burden of those arrears as well as fathers' ability to pay. Results indicate that while the accumulation of relatively low levels of arrears has the desirable result of drawing marginally attached fathers into the labor force, it pushes away the group of particularly disadvantaged group of fathers who went at least 1 year without any income. The accrual of large amounts of arrears to these fathers damages their ability to provide support for children by limiting their subsequent participation in the formal labor market, contrary to the aim of the CSE system. It thus places increased burden on custodial mothers and taxpayers to provide for the children of these fathers.

These findings are consistent with the overall trends in the accumulation of arrears over time highlighted by Sorensen and colleagues (2007), wherein a small group of fathers was responsible for the accumulation of the vast majority of the $110 billion in arrears since 1975. Data on arrears at the 5-year follow-up (not used in this analysis) indicate that the rate of arrears accumulation is faster for fathers with relatively high arrears burdens but no income than for those with relatively high burdens but some income in the previous year. Indeed, the number of fathers in each category in the arrears-to-income variable as well as the average dollar amount of arrears owed by each group reportedly increases between the 3- and 5-year follow-ups, and the average ratio of arrears to income reportedly increases substantially for fathers with high arrears burdens. To the extent that such increases persist and amount to behavioral changes for fathers facing increasingly large burdens, the influence of growing arrears on LFP may become more pervasive as children age.

It is important to emphasize that the findings are not entirely negative. As reported above, fathers with relatively low arrears burdens who are marginally attached to the labor force are estimated to be more likely to engage in formal work. To the extent that such behavior is the intended response to policy (fathers working more to meet their debts), there is some evidence that when arrears are low relative to income, they can be a useful policy tool to induce child support compliance. However, findings also suggest that excessive arrears burdens may be linked to exit from the formal labor force, limiting the overall ability of arrears to encourage increased work.

This study might be improved in several ways. First, it relies on mother's report of arrears and arrears amounts, limiting the precision of the estimates, but ideally, direct administrative information on families' participation in the CSE system would be used to analyze arrears. However, to the authors' knowledge, no source of data exists that contains this infor-

mation as well as data on the other variables necessary for this study. Also, to the extent that error in mothers' reports of arrears is random in nature, such imprecision would bias the study's coefficients for arrears downward, implying that arrears may indeed have greater associations with formal LFP than those reported here. An undercount of arrears as a consequence of not including money owed on orders for other children could also indicate that the estimates are biased downward.

Second, although the authors attempted to strengthen the causal interpretation of the results by using a strict temporal ordering, a large number of controls, and lagged dependent variables modeling, it is nonetheless possible that the results are biased because of unobserved heterogeneity. Although the sensitivity analyses provide some additional confidence in our results, these may still be biased by unobserved heterogeneity in the sample of fathers. As future waves of the FFCWS become available, this work should be replicated to discern whether any relationship persists as children age. Likewise, the results of this study should be replicated as new data sources become available.

In addition, the composition of the comparison group in all analyses (fathers with no arrears) poses some challenges for the interpretation of the findings. Fathers without arrears are a heterogeneous group, including unmarried fathers without child support orders, unmarried fathers with current child support orders, and married fathers. Nonetheless, previous research establishes the precedent of including all fathers in analyses (Freeman and Waldfogel 1998). The intuition for this decision is further supported by previous research of the FFCWS, which suggests that many fathers exit early, committed relationships by the time their children reach age 5 (McLanahan and Beck 2010), increasing the probability that mothers will seek child support orders and that fathers will have arrears.

Overall, the findings of this study have serious implications for the current system of arrears, particularly for those fathers with little means to pay child support obligations. Although fathers should be made legally responsible for their children, a system that further jeopardizes the ability of certain fathers to work and provide support is clearly one in need of overhaul. One option is additional means testing in the CSE program. Though in the context of enforcement policy, means testing may seem inappropriate, low-income fathers pay a higher proportion of their income in child support than higher-income fathers (Huang et al. 2005). For this reason, means testing already occurs in provisions such as the self-support reserve, minimum child support orders, and restrictions on the total percent of wages that may be withheld to cover a child support order and arrears. Although these provisions acknowledge that all fathers have a responsibility to support their children, they also acknowledge that not all fathers can afford to do so.

Another option is to adopt proposals for forgiveness of child support debt (Bartfeld 2003). Although the full effect of such programs is not well

understood, a demonstration program in the state of Wisconsin forgave child support debt for NCPs who made regular payments on their child support orders. This program finds that participants pay more toward their child support obligations, make more frequent payments, and are successful in reducing their child support debt (Heinrich, Burkhardt, and Shager 2011) than those not part of the demonstration. If such programs can be implemented more broadly, they may offset some of the negative consequences on LFP demonstrated here.

As a final note, these and other changes to the CSE system may become increasingly necessary if future policies, such as an Earned Income Tax Credit for nonresident fathers, are linked to employment and payment of child support obligations, as was the case in legislation considered before the 111th House (US House of Representatives 2979) and Senate (US Senate 1309).

Note

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Burnout in Child Welfare: The Role of Employment Characteristics and Workplace Opportunities

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This study uses caseworker and agency data from the National Survey of Child and Adolescent Well-Being to explore the relationship among employment characteristics, workplace opportunities for need satisfaction, and burnout among child welfare workers. In a four-step process, linear-regression models are estimated to determine whether employment characteristics are associated with worker burnout and to test whether workplace opportunities for achievement, autonomy, and affiliation mediate the relationships. The author finds annual salary, adoption work, and whether the agency operates under a consent decree to be negatively associated with burnout. Opportunities for achievement, autonomy, and affiliation mediate the association between consent decrees and burnout, but worker pay and adoption work remain statistically significant inverse predictors of burnout. The article concludes by discussing implications for policy and future research.

The study of child welfare workers is of particular importance to state and local governments because of ongoing concerns about safety and permanency outcomes for system-involved children and the persistent struggle to recruit and retain qualified workers. Annual worker turnover in child welfare agencies averages between 20 and 40 percent nationally, costing agencies both financially, through recruitment and training costs, and qualitatively, through having an inexperienced workforce, staff shortages, and discontinuity in the relationship between caseworkers and families (Reagh 1994; Graef and Hill 2000; Annie E. Casey Foundation 2003; Zlotnik et al. 2005). Burnout is a key precursor to turnover that can be found in workers' perceptive and affective responses to their work. While previous research studies focus on how child welfare workers' attitudes and perceptions of their work environments predict turnover, there is limited theoretical and empirical understanding of the objective aspects of child wel-

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fare jobs and work environments that are associated with burnout (Drake and Yadama 1996; Weaver et al. 2007; Chernesky and Israel 2009).

Susan E. Jackson and Randall S. Schuler (1983) define burnout as a psychological process comprising attitudinal (perceptive) and emotional (affective) responses to both work and personal experiences. Previous studies define burnout as encompassing three general elements: emotional exhaustion, diminished personal accomplishment, and depersonalization of clients (Maslach and Jackson 1986). Symptoms of burnout are prevalent among child welfare workers (Fryer et al. 1988; Stevens and Higgins 2002; Conrad and Kellar-Guenther 2006), increasing turnover and creating other consequences for agencies and clients. Although burnout is a key predictor of job exit in child welfare, many of the workers who want to quit their jobs do not actually leave (Fryer, Miyoshi, and Thomas 1989). For those workers who remain on the job, burnout manifests in the workplace as work avoidance, apathy toward the well-being of clients, and feelings of cynicism and futility (Harrison 1980; Karger 1981; Maslach, Schaufeli, and Leiter 2001). While it is problematic for workers to divest themselves of responsibilities in any job, it is particularly troubling in child welfare agencies, where the failure to evaluate child safety and family needs appropriately can put children at risk. For example, Robin A. McGee (1989) finds that workers with high levels of burnout are more likely and quicker to conclude that children in hypothetical cases are at no risk of harm.

Overall, previous research devotes insufficient attention to the study of worker burnout in child welfare. Much of it uses state or regional samples, which cannot be generalized nationally due to vast differences in child welfare systems across states. This study uses a national sample of child welfare workers to provide new insight into how the characteristics of their job are related to burnout and to apply a theoretical model of need motivation to the understanding of burnout. Drawing on need theories of work motivation, this article proposes workers' opportunities to fulfill achievement, autonomy, and affiliation needs as mediators, which are variables that potentially explain or account for the association between employment characteristics and burnout. Specifically, this study addresses three questions: (1) Which employment characteristics are related to burnout among child welfare workers? (2) Are opportunities to meet achievement, autonomy, and affiliation needs associated with lower levels of burnout? and (3) Are the relationships between employment characteristics and burnout mediated by achievement, autonomy, and affiliation opportunities?

Need Theories of Work Motivation

Need theories in employment research aim to explain attitudes and behaviors in the workplace. These theories assume that individuals have internal needs that they seek to meet and that they are motivated to be-

have in a manner that enables their needs to be met (Salancik and Pfeffer 1977; Ramlall 2004). Negative attitudes and behaviors arise when workers are unsuccessful or obstructed from meeting their needs (Salancik and Pfeffer 1977).[1]

Scholars primarily emphasize four work-related needs: achievement, autonomy, affiliation, and power (McClelland 1961, 1971; McClelland et al. 1976). The first three, which to date receive the most attention in the literature, give rise to a main hypothesis of this study: that opportunities to satisfy workers' achievement, autonomy, and affiliation needs (hereafter referred to as need-satisfaction opportunities), or the lack thereof, explain the relationship between employment characteristics and burnout.

Prior research explores correlates of burnout in two ways. The most common way is to measure associations between workers' feelings about their work environments and their burnout symptoms and, from those results, to draw inferences about the quality or characteristics of the agency environment and the job itself. By focusing on how workers perceive their work environments, this approach overlooks variations in employment characteristics and interprets differences in workers' levels of burnout as a function of internal differences among workers rather than external differences across agencies and jobs. Second, studies of burnout sometimes identify associations between objectively measured characteristics of employment and burnout. This approach allows for the work environment to vary by agency and by job type but cannot fully explain why workers have different experiences in the same environment and job type. This study integrates these two approaches by defining workers' perceptions of their work environments as evaluations about the extent to which the characteristics of their jobs and agencies provide opportunities for achievement, autonomy, and affiliation.

Achievement

Meeting workers' achievement needs requires role clarity, minimal conflict between the role and their values, external recognition, and advancement opportunities in the work environment (Steers and Porter 1979). Of these, role clarity and role conflict are the most widely studied in the burnout literature. Role clarity is defined as the extent to which workers are uncertain about aspects of their jobs: for instance, what the protocols or regulations are, how they will be evaluated, how tasks are prioritized, and so forth. Role conflict is defined as the extent to which workers

1. However, assessment of individual workers' needs is "a hypothetical process . . . imagined in order to account for certain objective and subjective facts" (Murray 1938, 54). That is, while the valence of child welfare workers' needs for achievement, autonomy, and affiliation is immeasurable, this study assumes that all workers have some need for affiliation, autonomy, and achievement and focuses on how their employment provides opportunities to meet those needs.

are faced with competing values and demands in the functions of their work (Vinzant 1998; Cameron et al. 2007). Both are considered types of role strain, and both are common problems among child welfare workers (Vinzant 1998). The majority of the available research suggests that all role strain constructs are correlated with burnout (Lee and Ashforth 1996; Kim and Stoner 2008), although to varying degrees (Jayaratne and Chess 1984; Munn, Barber, and Fritz 1996).

Opportunities for advancement and recognition at work are also dimensions of achievement needs. Child welfare work generally offers few advancement opportunities and little positive acknowledgment (Lewandowski 1998; Lloyd, King, and Chenoweth 2002; Chenot 2011). Recognition refers to both the level of prestige associated with an occupation and the extent to which agencies acknowledge employees' work by way of tangible rewards, such as promotions or bonuses, or intangible recognition in the form of verbal or written praise. In child welfare, where client involvement is often involuntary and public discourse about the field is primarily negative, agency recognition of achievement and dedication may be particularly important. And despite the fact that workers may find intrinsic value in their work even in the absence of external acknowledgment (Reagh 1994; Light 2003), those working with vulnerable or stigmatized populations tend to feel unappreciated and unrewarded for their work (Light 2003). A lack of advancement opportunity is predictive of turnover (National Council on Crime and Delinquency 2006), but no study yet establishes the connection between advancement opportunities and burnout for child welfare workers.

Autonomy

Autonomy in the context of child welfare work is broadly defined as the extent to which workers are able to use their own professional judgment with regard to particular cases. Autonomous workers do not simply apply prescriptive policies, regulations, or assessment tools and are not subject to administrative or supervisory micromanagement. While a lack of job autonomy is related to burnout in general (Maslach et al. 2001), research examining an association between autonomy and burnout in social service occupations is not conclusive (Arches 1991; Kim and Stoner 2008). Understanding the relationship between autonomy and burnout among child welfare workers is particularly pertinent because in the past few decades, massive overhauls of child welfare systems at the state and federal levels have greatly diminished job autonomy for child welfare workers.

Affiliation

Recent studies also explore opportunities for affiliation (also called peer support) as a correlate of burnout, although evidence of an association is

not conclusive. Supervisory and peer support are thought to be particularly important in preventing emotional exhaustion, one of the three dimensions of burnout (Houkes et al. 2003; Halbesleben 2006), and cross-industry studies find both to be associated with lower levels of burnout (Bakker, Demerouti, and Euwema 2005; Halbesleben 2006). But despite general support for the association between affiliation opportunity and burnout, studies sampling only child welfare workers find no statistically significant relationship between peer affiliation and burnout (Arches 1991; Savicki and Cooley 1994; Kim and Stoner 2008; Boyas and Wind 2010).

Employment Factors

Given the limited theoretical and empirical knowledge in this area, as well as limitations in data availability, this article focuses on employment factors that vary across agencies and workers, which research suggests may be associated with need-satisfaction opportunities and burnout. In exploring agency factors, the author focuses on factors that are increasingly common in child welfare systems across the United States: consent decrees, privatization, and cuts to staffing and funding. While there are additional trends across child welfare systems that merit investigation (e.g., managed care approaches, title IV-E partnerships between agencies and universities), these factors are not measured in national data sets. This study explores job type and salary because they are understudied in child welfare, despite being key features of employment that receive much attention in other occupational fields.

Consent Decrees

More than half of US state child welfare systems have been the subject of litigation over the past 3 decades, and many continue to operate under the resulting consent decrees (Kosanovich, Joseph, and Hasbargen 2005; Farber et al. 2007). Consent decrees in child welfare typically include maximum caseload standards and increases in documentation requirements and regulations. While reduced caseloads are associated with lower burnout (Jayaratne and Chess 1984), higher documentation requirements and more regulations may decrease autonomy and achievement opportunities and, thereby, increase symptoms of burnout. The loss of autonomy that accompanies increased regulation may leave some workers feeling disempowered, unchallenged, or unfulfilled (Karger 1981; Jayaratne and Chess 1984; Howe 1992; Smith and Donovan 2003). Moreover, because these regulations place emphasis on administrative, low-skilled tasks, they may limit the time and attention that workers are able to devote to the needs and objectives of families (O'Donnell 1992; Westbrook, Ellis, and Ellett 2006; Noonan, Sabel, and Simon 2009). Although the various goals,

conditions, and modes of implementation contained in consent decrees may be differently associated with need-satisfaction opportunities or burnout, this study predicts that workers whose agencies operate under consent decrees will report less opportunity for autonomy.

Privatization

The use of subcontracting in child welfare systems has been expanding for several decades, with advocates touting privatization as one way to reduce bureaucratization (McRoy 2003). Some existing evidence suggests that privatization is detrimental to workers—through the deprofessionalization of casework and the low pay, benefits, and advancement opportunities often found in private agencies—and to clients, who tend to receive fewer services and are less likely to achieve reunification in removal cases compared with clients serviced by public agencies (Lewandowski 1998; Petr and Johnson 1999; Dreyfus and Hornung 2006). Yet, other studies indicate that levels of burnout are lower among private agency workers, who are more satisfied with their work environments and have a more optimistic perception of their skill levels compared to public child welfare workers (Washington et al. 2009; Kim 2010; Collins-Carmargo, Sullivan, and Murphy 2011). However, existing studies are limited in generalizability and by the potential for omitted-variable bias. Furthermore, turnover is much higher in private agencies than in public agencies, at 45 percent and 22 percent respectively (Cypher 2001; Drais-Parillo 2003). Similarly, organizational commitment, another correlate of burnout, is lower among private agency foster care workers compared with their public agency counterparts (Jayaratne and Fuller 2009). Hence, after controlling for experience and job type, this study should find equal or higher levels of burnout among private agency workers, compared to public workers.[2]

Job Type

Many studies view child welfare workers as a collective group, yet particular child welfare positions, such as investigative, ongoing, foster care, and adoption workers, incur different responsibilities and stressors that may be differentially associated with need-satisfaction opportunities and burnout. For example, investigators spend little time with each family and often only see families in times of distress and crisis, rarely observing or partaking in successful family or child outcomes. By contrast, adoption workers engage primarily with adoptive families, who are voluntarily involved with the system. Consequently, the author anticipates that investigators will report lower achievement opportunities, while adoption work-

2. Additionally, there are likely unobserved differences between the two types of worker; i.e., workers select to work in either public or private agencies, but the mechanisms of selection into either type of agency are not yet studied.

ers will report higher achievement opportunities, and that adoption work, at both private and public agencies, will be associated with lower levels of burnout.

Worker Salary

Child welfare work, especially in private agencies, offers noncompetitive wages (Lewandowski 1998; Light 2003; Dreyfus and Hornung 2006; Westbrook et al. 2006; Hollingsworth et al. 2010). Although prior work suggests that workers in human service fields tend to be motivated by internal rather than external rewards (Crewson 1997; Wright 2007), others point to low salaries as a factor contributing to low job satisfaction, high turnover, and staff recruitment problems in child welfare agencies (Jayaratne and Chess 1984; Government Accountability Office 2003). Monetary rewards reflect the relative societal values attached to different types of work, and, thus, low compensation may be perceived as the devaluation of the worker's skills and efforts. Prior research does not explore a link between salary and burnout in child welfare, despite considerable variation in worker salaries within and across locales.

In summary, the prior research on burnout focuses on elements related to achievement, autonomy, and affiliation and finds that elements of achievement opportunity consistently predict burnout, whereas autonomy and affiliation are not consistently associated with burnout. Previous studies do not generally explore the relation of burnout to employment characteristics such as job type or consent decrees in child welfare.

Method

Data

The National Surveys of Child and Adolescent Well-Being (NSCAW I and II) are nationally representative, longitudinal studies of children who were either the subject of a child protection investigation or in out-of-home care subsequent to child protective services intervention.[3] The second NSCAW cohort (NSCAW II) was first interviewed in 2008, and the second wave of interviews occurred 18 months later. This study uses the second wave of NSCAW II because it includes more extensive interviews with caseworkers and agency directors than in the first wave; specifically, in the first wave child welfare staff report only demographic information and information pertaining to sampled Child Protective

3. NSCAW I was initiated following a congressional mandate in 1999 and followed a cohort of cases for 5 years. NSCAW II was conducted in part because the child welfare reforms that have taken place across the United States since 1999 made NSCAW I less temporally relevant (Dolan et al. 2011).

Services cases, whereas, in the second wave, they also report on their work conditions. The second wave of NSCAW II includes nearly 6,000 cases from 86 agencies and 83 counties.[4] The initial response rate for the survey in wave 1 is 55.84 percent, and the wave 2 response rate for caseworkers was 93.9 percent (Dolan et al. 2011; Casanueva et al. 2012). While the initial response rate is not as high as would be preferred, the use of a national sample is a notable addition to the literature on child welfare workers, which overwhelmingly uses state or county samples.

Sample

This study uses the caseworker as the unit of analysis. Since in the NSCAW II data, child is the unit of analysis, the author selected one observation per caseworker and dropped all duplicate records of a caseworker, resulting in a sample of 1,981 caseworkers from 85 agencies. To be included in the final sample, caseworkers must have completed some portion of the survey related to employment characteristics and attitudes and reported (1) their employment status as state, county, or private agency, as opposed to contract employees; (2) a job role of intake, investigation, ongoing services, reunification, or adoption; and (3) that they are not a supervisor. This yielded a final sample of 1,483 caseworkers. Table 1 summarizes descriptive statistics on caseworkers and their agencies. The final sample is predominantly female and racially diverse, with a median of 3 years working in the caseworker's current agency. The majority of the caseworkers describe themselves as ongoing or foster care workers, and most report being public employees.

Measures

Criterion variable.—The criterion variable of interest, burnout, is measured by a scale containing 14 items. Respondents answered using a five-point category partition scale, with response options ranging from 0 (not at all) to 4 (a very great extent). The items target the three elements of burnout: emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and decreased personal accomplishment (Maslach and Jackson 1986). Table 2 presents sample questions and reliability information.[5]

Predictive variables.—The author used two measures of employment characteristics at the agency level: (1) whether any staffing cuts have taken place in the past year and (2) whether the agency is operating under one or more consent decrees. Both of these variables are measured dichoto-

4. Counties selected for NSCAW II are chosen on the basis of the primary sampling units used in NSCAW I. For a complete explanation of the sampling procedure, refer to Mary Bruce Webb (2011).

5. The complete set of burnout questions listed by subscale can be found in appendix table A1.

Table 1

SAMPLE DESCRIPTION

	Mean	SD	%
Caseworker demographics:*			
Male			12.34
Non-Hispanic black			31.12
Native Indian/Hawaiian/Asian			5.27
Non-Hispanic white			46.62
Hispanic			18.06
Master's degree/PhD			32.35
Age	36.99	10.64	
Years at current agency†	3.00	5.11	
Years in child welfare†	5.00	6.90	
Caseworker job characteristics:			
Annual income (pretax)†	38,000	25,462.46	
Private agency employees			19.95
Intake/ongoing/foster care			18.94
Adoption			.94
Public agency employees			80.05
Investigation			6.14
Intake/ongoing/foster care			66.83
Adoption			7.08
Agency-level information:‡			
Staffing cut in past year			56.63
Operating under a consent decree			33.73
Agency funding cut in past year (%)	9.7	.09	

* $N = 1,483$.
† Median amount.
‡ $N = 85$.

mously. The proportion of the agency's funding that was cut in the past year is also included as a continuous variable.[6]

Four dummy variables are used for job type: (1) private agency adoption work, (2) public agency adoption work, (3) public agency investigative work, and (4) private agency ongoing and intake work. The omitted category is public agency ongoing and intake work. Ongoing and intake work are combined because of the low number of intake workers in the sample. The measures of agency type and job type are interacted in order to assess whether private agency workers experience higher, lower, or the same levels of burnout as public workers with the same job. Investigative work is nearly universally performed by public workers; thus, there is no private agency category for this position. Worker income is measured dichotomously, indicating whether the worker earns above the sample median of $38,000 annually in pretax income. The measure is dichotomous,

6. Although it would seem that funding and staffing cuts would be concurrent, the correlation between the two variables is low ($r = .145$). Hence, funding cuts may affect workers differently than staffing cuts (e.g., by a reduction in funds available to provide services to clients or pay cuts to current workers).

Table 2

SCALE DESCRIPTIONS

	Items	Sample Item	α
Criterion measure/subscale:			.88
Burnout	16		.93
Emotional exhaustion	5	I feel emotionally drained from my work.	.76
Decreased accomplishment	6	I have accomplished many worthwhile things at this job.	.76
Depersonalization	5	I find myself not caring what happens to some clients.	
Mediation measure/subscale:			.89
Achievement opportunity*	21		.78
Role clarity	9	Goals and objectives are clearly defined in my job.	.71
Recognition	4	Agency rewards experience, dedication, and hard work.	.86
Advancement opportunities	4	Agency provides opportunities to advance.	.67
Role conflict	4	I have to do things on my job that are against my better judgment.	.82
Autonomy opportunity*	16		.80
Discretion	14	I have to ask my supervisor or coordinator before doing anything.	.78
Regulatory constraints	2	Rules and regulations get in the way of getting things done.	.70
Affiliation opportunity	6	Unit members interact positively with one another.	

* Items are reverse scored.

given concerns about measurement error in the data, in which there are extreme outliers on both ends of the distribution.[7]

There is disagreement about whether job stress and burnout are distinct constructs or simply variants of the same construct or whether job stress is the proximate cause of burnout (Cordes and Dougherty 1993; Pines and Keinan 2005). Since variables related to job stress are simultaneously reflective of job content and emotional or attitudinal response, variables reflecting job stress are not used as predictors, in order to avoid including overlapping constructs among the outcome and explanatory measures.

Mediators.—The author constructed three scales that measure need-satisfaction opportunities and tested them as mediators. The scales are based on information reported from workers and assess concepts that are ubiquitous in the employee motivation literature: achievement, affiliation, and autonomy. Although the items are not drawn from standardized scales of these specific concepts, they adequately reflect the elements of each concept.[8] First, the author constructed the achievement scale as a proxy for the likelihood that a worker's need for achievement can be met given the work environment. It consists of four subscales: role clarity, role conflict, recognition, and opportunities for advancement. Second, the autonomy scale assesses the extent to which workers have opportunities to use professional discretion (judgment), defined as the extent to which decisions are made by the supervisor or the worker and the rigidity of protocols. And third, the affiliation scale represents opportunities for workers to meet affiliation needs, based on their ratings of workplace cohesion and support. All three of the need-satisfaction opportunity scales have normal distributions in this sample.

Analytic Approach

The analytic approach is twofold. First, the author uses descriptive statistics to assess the extent of burnout, as well as perceptions of achievement, autonomy, and affiliation opportunities, by job type among child welfare workers. Then, ordinary least squares regression models estimate the associations among employment characteristics, need-satisfaction opportunities, and burnout.

This study tests four specific hypotheses: (1) favorable employment characteristics (e.g., higher salary, lack of cuts of funding or staffing) are

7. The median salary in this sample for child welfare workers is higher than that reported elsewhere. The 2001 average salary for child welfare workers was $33,000 and $27,000 for public and private agency workers, respectively (Alliance for Children and Families, American Public Human Services Association, and Child Welfare League of America 2001). The higher average here may, in part, reflect NSCAW II's purposive oversampling of large states, which tend to have higher standards of living or differences in union density in the sampled counties.

8. Items are drawn from the Organizational Social Context index (Glisson et al. 2008).

positively associated with need-satisfaction opportunities, (2) favorable employment characteristics are inversely associated with worker burnout, (3) need-satisfaction opportunities are inversely associated with burnout, and (4) associations between employment factors and burnout are no longer statistically significant when need-satisfaction opportunities are entered into the model. This study tests those hypotheses in four steps, adapted from the mediation model of Reuben M. Baron and David A. Kenny (1986): (1) achievement, autonomy, and affiliation opportunity are regressed on employment characteristics; (2) burnout is regressed on measures of achievement, autonomy, and affiliation opportunity; (3) burnout is regressed on employment characteristics; and (4) burnout is regressed on employment characteristics and achievement, autonomy, and affiliation opportunities.

Steps 1, 2, and 4, which include variables measured at the agency level, cluster standard errors by agency. Since previous studies dispute the relationship between caseworkers' personal characteristics and burnout (Stalker and Harvey 2002), all models also control for personal characteristics of the worker, including age, race, sex, educational degree, and whether the worker has 5 or more years of experience at his or her current job. However, no hypotheses are posed with regard to the relationships between workers' demographic characteristics and burnout. All models are estimated using probability weights for the primary sampling unit, which is the county from which sampled cases are selected.

Missing Data

To resolve the problem of data missing at random (the probability of data being missing depends on observed, rather than unobserved, data), the author uses a two-step process of multiple imputation rather than list-wise deletion or other less robust methods, such as mean imputation or missing value dummies (Rubin 1987).[9] Due to the multilevel nature of the variables, with some employment characteristics measured at the agency level, and agencies represented multiple times in the data, one imputation model would be insufficient, as it would produce nonexistent variation within a given agency. The author adapts the two-step process recommended by Andrew Gelman and Jennifer Hill (2007) to address imputation with multilevel data. In both steps, STATA MI generates 40 imputations, using the multivariate normal imputation method. Thus, the first step entails imputing caseworker level variables using all relevant caseworker variables and nonmissing agency-level variables. In the second step, a data set is constructed in which all agency duplicates are dropped (such that there is only one value per agency for each agency-level variable included in the analyses), and caseworker level vari-

9. See appendix table A2 for a complete description of the missing data.

Table 3

MEAN VALUES FOR KEY VARIABLES BY JOB AND AGENCY TYPE

		PRIVATE AGENCY		PUBLIC AGENCY			
MEASURE	TOTAL	Ongoing	Adoption	Investigation	Ongoing	Adoption	PROB(F)
Burnout	1.37	1.31	1.21	1.44	1.93	1.23	$p < .05$
Achievement opportunity	2.27	2.37	2.30	2.32	2.25	2.16	$p < .05$
Autonomy opportunity	2.01	2.21	1.85	1.92	1.96	2.02	$p < .001$
Affiliation opportunity	2.92	3.03	2.91	2.90	2.90	2.84	$p < .05$

NOTE.—$N = 1,483$.

ables are reduced to agency-wide averages. That is, for each predictive variable measured on the caseworker level, including the criterion variable (burnout), the author constructs a variable whose value is equal to the median value of that variable for all workers in a given agency. Both steps use a ridge prior distribution because of colinearity among predictors and, in the case of the agency-level data set, a small number of observations. After imputing missing data for both groups, the author merged the agency and caseworker data sets back into a single data set.

Results

Descriptive Results

Table 3 displays the mean values for the burnout measure and for all potential mediators. Each mediator scale ranges from 0 to 4, and means are presented for the full sample as well as for each agency and job type subgroup. The last column of the table indicates results from ANOVA tests for statistically significant differences between groups. Workers report an average burnout level of 1.37, but there are differences among groups, with public agency ongoing workers and investigators reporting higher levels of burnout than adoption and private agency ongoing workers. On the need-satisfaction opportunity scales, workers report higher average levels of opportunities for achievement and affiliation than for autonomy. There are statistically significant differences between groups, particularly for private agency ongoing workers, who average higher scores on all three scales.

Regression Results

Hypothesis 1: Favorable employment characteristics are positively associated with need-satisfaction opportunities.—Table 4 presents the results of ordinary least squares regressions of the proposed mediators on employment

Table 4

LEAST-SQUARES REGRESSIONS OF NEED-SATISFACTION OPPORTUNITIES ON JOB CHARACTERISTICS

	ACHIEVEMENT OPPORTUNITY		AUTONOMY OPPORTUNITY		AFFILIATION OPPORTUNITY	
MEASURE	β	SE	β	SE	β	SE
Agency under consent decree	.140**	.043	.101*	.042	.044	.042
Agency staffing cut in past year	−.068	.053	−.180***	.048	−.123*	.057
Agency funding cut in past year (%)	−.497	.367	−.441	.338	.540	.358
Earning above sample median ($38,000 pretax)	.018	.072	.005	.055	−.025	.045
Private agency:						
Ongoing/intake casework	.069	.052	.289***	.063	.161**	.055
Adoption work	−.189	.226	.143	.196	−.281	.240
Public agency:						
Investigations	.210	.106	.042	.085	.038	.050
Adoption work	−.049	.074	.096	.058	−.051	.077

NOTE.—N = 1,483. Omitted group is public agency ongoing/intake casework. Models control for caseworker age, sex, race, education, and experience.

* $p < .05$.

** $p < .01$.

*** $p < .001$.

characteristics. Results suggest that workers employed by agencies operating under consent decrees perceive that they have greater opportunities to meet achievement needs than do workers whose agencies are not operating under consent decrees. Contrary to expectations, the measure of consent decrees is positively associated with the measure of autonomy opportunities.

Neither the measure of funding cuts nor that of worker pay has statistically significant associations with measures of any of the three need-satisfaction opportunities. The measure of agency staffing cuts is negatively associated with the measure of affiliation and autonomy opportunities. The dummy variable for private agency ongoing and intake casework is positively associated with autonomy and affiliation opportunity compared to public agency ongoing work.

Hypothesis 2: Favorable employment characteristics are inversely associated with worker burnout.—These results can be found in model 1 of table 5. Employees of agencies operating under consent decrees are estimated to report, on average, lower levels of burnout than the other employees. And consistent with expectations, this study finds that burnout is not lower among private agency employees compared with public agency workers. The only statistically significant combination of agency and job type associated with burnout is public agency adoption work, whose measure does have an inverse relationship with the measure of burnout. However, the coefficient for private agency adoption work, which is of the same direction and similar magnitude, approaches statistical significance ($p < .10$). Contrary to expectations, public agency investigators are

Table 5

LEAST-SQUARES REGRESSIONS OF BURNOUT ON JOB CHARACTERISTICS AND NEED-SATISFACTION OPPORTUNITIES

	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3	
Measure	β	SE	β	SE	β	SE
Achievement opportunity			−.516***	.034	−.519***	.032
Autonomy opportunity			−.249***	.033	−.249***	.024
Affiliation opportunity			−.049	.032	−.058	.039
Agency under consent decree	−.128*	.036			−.028	.036
Agency staffing cut in past year	.058	.042			−.030	.026
Agency funding cut in past year (%)	.082	.321			−.315	.260
Earning above sample median ($38,000 pretax)	−.082	.054			−.073***	.021
Private agency:						
Ongoing/intake casework	−.106	.054			.012	.028
Adoption work	−.198	.134			−.275	.083
Public agency:						
Investigations	−.024	.074			.098	.073
Adoption work	−.203**	.062			−.207***	.040

NOTE. —N = 1,483. Omitted group is public agency ongoing/intake casework. Models control for caseworker age, sex, race, education, and experience.

* $p < .05$.

** $p < .01$.

*** $p < .001$.

not estimated to have higher levels of burnout than public agency ongoing and intake workers. The measures of staffing cuts, funding cuts, and income are not statistically significantly associated with the measure of burnout.

Hypothesis 3: Need-satisfaction opportunities are inversely associated with burnout.—Model 2 of table 5 presents these results.[10] After controlling for personal characteristics of the worker, both autonomy and achievement opportunity measures have statistically significant, negative associations with the measure of burnout. The coefficient for affiliation opportunity is quite small and only marginally significant ($p < .10$).

Hypothesis 4: Associations between employment factors and burnout are no longer statistically significant when need-satisfaction opportunities are entered into the model.—Model 3 of table 5 shows that the coefficient for agency consent decree decreases nearly to zero and is no longer statistically significant when need-satisfaction opportunities are entered into the model, indicating that need-satisfaction opportunities account for this relationship. The coefficient for public agency adoption work is slightly larger in the full-mediation model than in model 1, indicating that need-satisfaction opportunities do not mediate this relationship. In addition, worker pay and

10. Refer to appendix table A3 for coefficients on control variables for table 5.

private agency adoption work, the coefficients that are not statistically significant in model 1, emerge as significant negative predictors of burnout in the full model.

Discussion

The results of this study provide only limited support to a need-satisfaction model of burnout among child welfare workers, given that many of the tested employment factors are not statistically significantly associated with either need-satisfaction opportunities or burnout. First, despite increased regulation that potentially results from the implementation of consent decrees, workers operating under consent decrees report higher, rather than lower, opportunity for autonomy than workers who do not operate under those decrees. It may be that agencies that do not operate under consent decrees voluntarily incorporate some of the same regulatory and documentation burdens in an effort to prevent future litigation. Yet, this does not explain why both autonomy and achievement opportunities would be higher among those employed under agency consent decrees. One possibility is that agencies operating under consent decrees may have additional resources with which to implement new regulations and requirements, thus making those changes less burdensome and problematic for workers. A second explanation is that there is another variable that is positively associated with consent decrees as well as the measures of achievement opportunity and autonomy opportunity but that is unaccounted for in these analyses.

Second, the results also suggest that private agency workers perceive more opportunities to act autonomously in the workplace than public agency workers, although this may be due to public policy rather than work environment. Under federal law, public agencies retain ultimate responsibility for system-involved children, even when the cases are contracted out to private agencies. Consequently, private agencies enjoy a layer of protection from public and legal scrutiny, which may provide them with more freedom to make case decisions on the basis of their assessments of the situation, uninfluenced by fear of fallout.

Third, although funding cuts may reduce the resources available to workers to meet clients' needs, the measure of cuts is not associated with the measure of achievement opportunity. However, as the data do not provide information as to which aspects of an agency are most affected by the reduction in funding, it may be that workers do not absorb the direct effects of their agencies' reductions in funding.

Fourth, the measure of staffing cuts is statistically significantly associated with the measure of affiliation opportunity, which is not surprising considering that a loss of coworkers may mean a loss of friendships and support sources. Yet, the measure of staffing cuts is also negatively asso-

ciated with the measure of opportunity for autonomy. While this may be a spurious association, it could also reflect the manner in which the stress of staff shortages affects decision making since staffing cuts could increase workload burden on remaining workers, and managers and administrators may put additional pressure on remaining workers to meet case deadlines, forcing decisions made out of feasibility and workplace constraints rather than professional judgment.

Fifth, consistent with prior research on human services workers, the measure of affiliation opportunity is not associated with the measure of burnout (Arches 1991; Savicki and Cooley 1994; Kim and Stoner 2008; Boyas and Wind 2010). While workers may like their coworkers and believe they offer support, they may lack the time to draw on the support of coworkers.

Sixth, both private and public agency adoption workers report statistically significantly less burnout than public agency intake and ongoing workers. There is no indication that, overall, private or public agency workers report different levels of burnout. Rather, findings suggest that job role (adoption, ongoing, or investigation work) may be more important than agency type (public or private).

Finally, there is a negative relation between the measures of compensation and burnout, even after factoring in measures of other employment characteristics and need-satisfaction opportunities. While the body of research on internal rewards for public service workers suggests that satisfying internal needs may be more important than external rewards, workers are motivated by both monetary and nonmonetary incentives (Borzaga and Tortia 2006). Hence, agencies may somewhat compensate for low wages by enhancing opportunities to meet internal needs, but adequate compensation is still important for maintaining a high-performing workforce.

Limitations

The primary limitation of this study is that causal inference cannot be made. This study could not take advantage of the longitudinal survey design because the extended caseworker and agency director surveys were only completed at one data collection point. Additionally, a more balanced sample of workers by child welfare job orientation would allow for a better comparison of the role of job and agency type. Since the sample includes a large number of ongoing and foster care workers, estimates for some subgroups, particularly private agency adoption workers and investigators, may be imprecise due to low statistical power. Thus, while investigation work demonstrates no statistically significant predic-

tive ability for either burnout or need-satisfaction opportunity, there is an increased risk of type II error due to the small sample size for those workers. Private agency adoption work still emerges as a significant predictor of burnout, but the small sample size limits the generalizability of this finding. Future work should continue to explore possible associations between job type and burnout.

This study is also unable to explicate more clearly the role of consent decrees. While plausible explanations exist for why consent decrees might have an inverse association with burnout, this study could not provide an empirically based response to this question (see, e.g., Mezey 1998; Farber et al. 2007). Future research should explore the effects of major system changes, such as the particular components of consent decrees, on workers, including additional data collection on employment characteristics, such as caseload size, hours worked, and other job quality and compensation variables. In addition, the dichotomous measure of worker salary is fairly crude, and more comprehensive data on compensation (e.g., benefits, wage structure, paid leave policies) will help to determine how external or monetary incentives relate to burnout.

Finally, it is highly likely that variation exists among agencies in the number and types of cases they handle, as well as the legal and political contexts of their states and counties. Agencies also likely vary in the amount and type of resources available to them and to the communities in which they operate. These factors could not be taken into account in these analyses. Thus, future work should explore whether the findings in this study are influenced by agency or regional variations that are unobserved in these data.

Conclusions

This study adds to the existing literature in several ways. First, it uses a need-satisfaction model to test a theoretical explanation of worker burnout in child welfare. While the results do not fully support the theoretical model, conceptualizing attitudinal constructs as opportunities to satisfy internal need states can aid future research aimed at building and testing explanatory models of child welfare (or, more generally, human services) worker burnout. Achievement, autonomy, and peer affiliation, the internal need state constructs used in this study, succinctly encapsulate a number of attitudinal constructs used in prior research, such as role clarity, role conflict, and discretion, among others. Workers' opportunities for achievement and autonomy, but not peer affiliation, are estimated to be strongly associated with burnout. Findings are mixed on the extent to which need-satisfaction opportunities mediated relationships between employment

characteristics and burnout. The study finds evidence that agency consent decrees act as mediators. However, some of the employment factors tested are not statistically significantly associated with burnout in the nonmediation model. As such, research identifying employment factors related to burnout is necessary.

This study also contributes to existing literature by explaining the role of objectively measured employment characteristics. While a vast body of social work literature highlights how internal rewards function as protective against burnout, the findings here indicate that external rewards matter as well. Workers with lower compensation have higher average levels of burnout, even after controlling for achievement, autonomy, and affiliation opportunities and personal characteristics of workers. This has important implications for the capacity of agencies to maintain a high-performing workforce required for appropriate quality service delivery. Compensation for child welfare workers, which already falls substantially below the salaries for other helping professions, is particularly vulnerable now, as states search for areas to cut costs (Government Accountability Office 2003).

This study also adds to the existing evidence on the differences between private and public agency workers. Prior literature suggests that private agency workers have better work experiences than public agency workers (Washington et al. 2009; Kim 2010; Collins-Carmargo et al. 2011), but this study indicates that, once job type is taken into consideration, private agency workers do not report lower levels of burnout. Rather, both public and private agency adoption workers report lower levels of burnout, and all other job type or sector formulations are statistically insignificant. These findings indicate that a failure to account for job type when making comparisons between public and private agencies can lead to disparate results. Moreover, as this study's findings indicate an inverse relationship between adoption work and burnout, agencies can explore job reforms, such as cross-training workers to perform multiple roles or allowing some workers to make the transition to roles with lower burnout if necessary.

In sum, while litigation, regulation, and other approaches aimed at improving child welfare systems can be useful in improving staffing levels, workloads, and training, such reforms must also address the well-being of the workforce. Burnout, because of negative effects on performance and retention (McGee 1989; Maslach 1993; Drake and Yadama 1996; Weaver et al. 2007; Chernesky and Israel 2009), obstructs macrolevel efforts to improve the child welfare system. Thus, in addition to necessary administrative or policy reforms, improving conditions for workers should be a key focus in child welfare reform efforts. In exploring ways to address worker burnout, emphasis should be placed on straightforward reforms

that address external conditions such as improvements to compensation, as well as innovative efforts to provide opportunities for workers to achieve success and recognition in their jobs.

Appendix

Table A1

BURNOUT SCALE ITEMS BROKEN DOWN BY SUBSCALE

Personal Accomplishment Item	Depersonalization Item	Emotional Exhaustion Item
I easily create a relaxed atmosphere with clients.	I find that I treat some clients as impersonal objects.	I feel like I'm at the end of my rope.
I've accomplished many worthwhile things in this job.	Since taking job, I've become more callous.	I feel fatigued facing another day on the job.
I deal effectively with the problems of my clients.	It's hard to feel close to the clients I serve.	I feel used up at the end of the workday.
I am satisfied with the accomplishment I get from this job.	I worry that this job is hardening me emotionally.	I feel burned out from my work.
I am positively influencing other people's lives.	I find myself not really caring what happens to some clients.	I feel emotionally drained from my work.
I am calm in dealing with emotional problems of others.		

Table A2

MISSING DATA INFORMATION

	N	% of Full Sample
Explanation of missing values:		
Complete cases	975	65.70
Missing on 1 variable	402	27.09
Missing on 2–5 variables	107	7.21
Total	1,484	100.00
Missing for specific variables:		
Achievement opportunity	1	.1
Autonomy opportunity	0	0
Affiliation opportunity	3	.2
Consent decree	25	1.7
Agency staffing cut	41	2.8
Agency funding cut	387	26.1
Income	51	3.44
Sex	1	.1
Degree	0	0
Experience	1	.1
Non-Hispanic black	6	.4
Indian/Asian	79	5.3
Age	49	3.3

Table A3

Regression Coefficients for Caseworker Demographic Variables from Table 5 Models

	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3	
Measure	β	SE	β	SE	β	SE
Male	−.055	.042	−.064	.055	−.049	.040
Advanced degree	−.029	.034	.013	.052	−.013	.046
Over 5 years experience	.021	.087	.027	.100	−.013	.081
Non-Hispanic black	−.018	.035	−.099*	.049	−.021	.039
Hispanic	.057	.042	−.045	.074	.051	.049
Other race	.054	.073	.120*	.048	.055	.053
Age	−.010***	.001	−.010***	.003	−.009***	.003

Note.—$N = 1{,}483$. Omitted group is non-Hispanic white.
* $p < .05$.
*** $p < .001$.

Note

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The Self-Sufficiency Trap: A Critical Examination of Welfare-to-Work

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This article examines the notion of self-sufficiency as the central goal of recent policy efforts in Canada to move social assistance recipients into the labor market. The authors base their examination on a longitudinal, institutional-ethnographic study of 17 welfare-to-work participants attempting to make the transition from social assistance to employment in the province of Alberta, Canada. Findings from a thematic analysis of in-depth interviews with participants about their day-to-day experiences show that there is a considerable gap between "the promise" and "the reality" of welfare-to-work programs. This gap reveals the difficulties of relying on the goal of self-sufficiency for all citizens, demonstrating how, as an abstract ideological notion, self-sufficiency has shaped concrete policy orientations that affect marginalized citizens by overpromising and underdelivering sustainable employment.

Self-sufficiency is an oft-used yet underanalyzed concept in policy discussions about welfare reform. It has long been a key value in Western societies (Daugherty and Barber 2001) but became even more pronounced in recent years with an ideological shift toward active social policy (Banting 2005). Active social policy is premised on the assumption that the primary role of social policy is to facilitate human capital development for the purposes of cultivating autonomous citizens who are adaptable to the changing demands of the current labor market. It therefore marks a notable shift from the conceptualization of social policy as a safety net that provides citizens with security and protection from the inherent risks of the labor market. Achieving self-sufficiency is central to current thinking in Canada about how to create policies that address the needs of those dependent on the state for social assistance. Canada, like other countries

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throughout the Western world, actively promotes the transition of people from dependence on welfare to self-sufficiency through a set of policies commonly referred to as welfare-to-work (OECD 2005).

Internationally, welfare-to-work programs typically fall into one of two models: the work-first model, most often associated with welfare reform in the United States, and the human-capital model, more common in continental European and Nordic countries (Peck and Theodore 2000; Peck 2001). Although both models operate on the assumption that the best path to self-sufficiency is labor market attachment, they differ somewhat in their approach to achieving this goal. Whereas proponents of the work-first model assert that any job is a good job (Murphy 1997; Ridzi 2009), those espousing a human-capital approach suggest that citizens must invest in lifelong education and develop skills in order to ensure their financial security (Peck 2001; McKeen 2006). Programs in Canada are a hybrid of the two models, demonstrating elements of both work-first and human-capital approaches (Peck 2001). Income support programs in the provinces of Alberta and Ontario demonstrate a work-first orientation in both their approaches and their names: Alberta Works and Ontario Works (Klein 2003; Herd, Mitchell, and Lightman 2005; Alberta Employment and Immigration 2008). Yet in these provinces and elsewhere, many programs also assist welfare recipients in creating résumés, conducting job searches, honing employment skills, and upgrading academic credentials, which are evidence of a commitment to the human-capital approach to welfare-to-work (Gorlick and Brethour 1998; AHRE 2001). The prevailing attitude underpinning current Canadian social assistance policies is that, with a nudge in the right direction, along with support and training, welfare recipients will be able to find employment and leave welfare, thereby achieving self-sufficiency (Shragge 1997).

Because of this push toward self-sufficiency, even single parents with preschool children receiving social assistance are now mandated by policy makers in Canada to make efforts to integrate employment into their lives to free themselves from welfare dependency. A substantial body of literature from the United States and the United Kingdom exploring the effects of welfare reform on employment and income outcomes for welfare leavers shows that although welfare recipients have obtained jobs, welfare-to-work has not substantially enhanced the economic well-being for vulnerable families (Edin and Lein 1996; Cancian and Meyer 2000; Corcoran et al. 2000; Bloom and Michalopoulos 2001; Bivand et al. 2006). Instead, those who have been able to find and maintain employment are now part of the working poor, often with detrimental consequences to the well-being of their families (Seccombe, Battle Walters, and James 1999; Scott et al. 2004).

Unlike in the United States and the United Kingdom, the effect of welfare reform for welfare leavers remains a relatively understudied area of research in Canada, despite the fact that welfare reform, which has been

firmly established in Canada for well over a decade, signifies a substantial departure from previous approaches to welfare provision (Finnie, Irvine, and Sceviour 2005). To date, most studies focus on employment and income outcomes of welfare leavers generally (Elton et al. 1997; Shillington 1998; Frenette and Picot 2003), while some look at the implications of welfare reform on the health of welfare recipients (Lightman, Herd, and Mitchell 2008; Lightman, Mitchell, and Herd 2010). Similar to research conducted in the United States and the United Kingdom, this literature shows that although welfare-to-work is effective in substantially reducing welfare rolls and moving welfare recipients into employment, it does not help many of them to move out of poverty (Elton et al. 1997; Frenette and Picot 2003).[1] Various studies suggest that substantial numbers of welfare recipients return to social assistance after leaving welfare for employment (Shillington 1998; Michalopoulos et al. 2002; Frenette and Picot 2003). Part of the reason for this continued poverty and return to social assistance is that welfare-to-work typically leads to part-time, temporary, low-paying, or precarious jobs (Elton et al. 1997; Shillington 1998; Vosko 1999; Lightman et al. 2008). Because most of the jobs are not full time and/or full year, the number of hours worked is not enough to pull people out of poverty, even if market incomes are above minimum wage (Vosko, Cranford, and Zukewich 2003). Additionally, those who make the transition from welfare to work often experience food insecurity, hunger, and health problems similar to those on social assistance (Lightman et al. 2008). These studies contribute to understanding the realities for people living in poverty in Canada, whether they are on welfare or working. Yet a substantial gap remains in knowledge regarding the newer ideology of active social policy from the standpoint of welfare recipients, particularly those with small children who need to juggle work and family obligations.

The purpose of this article is not to provide more evidence establishing the poor income and employment outcomes of former welfare recipients per se. Rather, the authors make a unique contribution by offering some critical insights into why this is the case. This article contributes to a nascent body of qualitative research in Canada examining the experiences of welfare-to-work for low-income mothers with small children making the transition to employment (Baker and Tippin 1999; McMullin, Davies, and Cassidy 2002; Evans 2007; Gazso 2007; Gurnstein et al. 2008). Recent literature shows that the conflict between work and family is a central issue for low-income mothers (McMullin et al. 2002; Mason 2003; Gazso 2007; Gingrich 2008; Breitkreuz, Williamson, and Raine 2010), contribut-

1. Although welfare reforms likely contributed to a significant reduction in welfare caseloads, there is also evidence that economic growth in the late 1990s and 2000s also contributed to this sea change in welfare caseloads (Shillington 1998; Klein and Montgomery 2001; Kneebone and White 2009). Given the current economic downturn in Canada (Statistics Canada 2009), it is important to consider the extent to which current economic challenges will affect the employment opportunities of already vulnerable workers leaving welfare for work and subsequently lead to increases in welfare caseloads.

ing to increased stress and anxiety and, for some, leading to a return to welfare (McMullin et al. 2002; Mason 2003; Breitkreuz et al. 2010). This study provides an in-depth, longitudinal, institutional-ethnographic examination of a group of welfare-to-work participants with preschool children in the Province of Alberta as they attempt to make the transition from social assistance to employment, looking comprehensively at the effect of welfare-to-work on their employment, income, and child-care experiences.

Using an approach based in institutional ethnography, the authors critically examine how the experiences of low-income parents with young children are embedded within broader ideological and policy constructs. A detailed description of participants' day-to-day experiences and stories of the welfare-to-work transition provides critical insights into the problematic aspects of self-sufficiency as a uniform concept for all citizens, demonstrating how an abstract ideology can shape concrete policy orientations that are unhelpful and potentially detrimental for some groups of marginalized citizens. In particular, the authors are interested in how active social policy has shifted ideas about social assistance from a social citizenship perspective, where all citizens are entitled to a base level of benefits, to a market citizenship perspective, where citizenship entitlement is contingent on attachment to the labor market (Baker and Tippin 1999; Breitkreuz 2005).

The Canadian Social Policy Context

Canada is governed by a federalist system in which provincial governments have jurisdiction over health, education, and social services. Social assistance benefits are administered provincially through means-tested eligibility programs but are funded largely from federal government dollars. In the mid-1990s, fundamental changes in federal legislation created an opportunity for provincial governments to change the administration of social assistance benefits. Before 1996, the Canadian federal government distributed money to provinces through the Canada Assistance Plan (CAP), with the goals of preventing poverty and providing assistance to citizens in need (Armstrong 1996). CAP specified that income support be provided without a requirement to engage in paid work. In 1996, however, the Canada Health and Social Transfer (CHST) replaced CAP, providing block funding from the federal government to the provinces for health, social services, and postsecondary education. This gave provinces increased discretionary power about how to prioritize spending and removed the requirement that social assistance be provided without strings. Since the introduction of the CHST, provinces have the freedom to implement mandatory welfare-to-work policies, fundamentally altering the previous notion that welfare was a rights-based program. As a consequence, all Canadian provinces have implemented policy changes to

discourage welfare dependency (Gorlick and Brethour 1998; Finnie and Irvine 2008; Caragata and Cumming 2011). Three of the four most populous provinces, Alberta, Ontario, and British Columbia, introduced the most aggressive welfare-reduction policies, making it more difficult to apply for social assistance, reducing benefit levels, increasing surveillance of existing welfare recipients, and in the case of British Columbia, imposing a 2-year time limit for childless welfare recipients who are considered employable (Finnie and Irvine 2008). Since the introduction of welfare-to-work, the number of welfare recipients has decreased considerably. Although there are regional differences, the total number of people on social assistance in Canada declined by 41.3 percent between 1993 and 2003 (Statistics Canada 2004*b*).

Concurrent with welfare restructuring, benefits for families with children are offered to facilitate attachment to the labor force. In addition to subsidies for child care offered through provincial programs, there are two tiers of national benefits offered to families with children in Canada: the Canada Child Tax Benefit (CCTB) and the National Child Benefit Supplement (NCBS). The CCTB is a federal income-tested program offered to over 80 percent of Canadian families (Battle et al. 2001; National Child Benefit 2004), and another benefit program, the NCBS, provides additional income to low-income families (National Child Benefit 2004). Maximum yearly benefits for a family that qualified for both the CCTB and the NCBS in 2001 (the year in which data generation for this study was initiated) were $2,372 for the first child, $2,172 for a second child, and $2,175 for each additional child (Battle et al. 2001).[2] However, most provinces reduce social assistance benefits by the same amount that the NCBS adds, so welfare recipients are not better off financially with the national benefit, whereas working-poor families are. In this way, the Canadian NCBS is similar to the US Earned Income Tax Credit, in that they provide both incentives for low-income workers and increase welfare recipients' motivation to move into the labor market (Beauvais and Jenson 2001; Finnie and Irvine 2008). In the Canadian system, the incentive comes in the form of direct income supplements; in the United States, the incentive is offered through tax reductions and refunds (National Child Benefit 2004; Department of the Treasury 2010).

Framework

Institutional ethnography provides a methodological framework to examine critically the ways in which welfare-to-work participants' experiences intersect with the policies underlying welfare-to-work programs, providing important insights into why welfare-to-work does not yet sub-

2. Current maximum rates for the CCTB and the NCBS are $3,582 for the first child, $3,331 for the second child, and $3,335 for each additional child (Canada Revenue Agency 2012).

stantially help to reduce poverty or lead to self-sufficiency for welfare recipients with young children. Two key concepts from institutional ethnography inform this analysis: "work" (Smith 1987, 165) and "relations of ruling" (69). The concept of work captures the day-to-day activities people engage in, the material conditions of their lives, and is conducted in "real time," referring to the details of the mundane practices of everyday life when they occur (165). However, the analytical interest here is not the participants' experiences but what these experiences tell us about the extralocal organization of welfare restructuring. Although beginning with the experiences (or work) of participants, this article aims to move beyond participants' motivations, behaviors, and stories to reveal the social and economic organization behind them (Smith 1998).

Marie Campbell and Frances Gregor (2002) summarize this approach: "underlying anyone's everyday life experience, something invisible is happening to generate a particular set of circumstances. It is that 'something' that is of research interest" (17). This, as yet invisible, "something" constitutes the external, or extralocal, processes of the second key concept from institutional ethnography that informs the analytical approach, the "relations of ruling" (Smith 1987, 69). The term, the relations of ruling, refers to the way that power is maintained by those in charge, primarily through textually mediated discourse that subordinates "local experiential knowing to the discursive" (Campbell 2006, 95). In welfare-to-work policies, discourse centers on the primacy of employment as both the ticket to self-sufficiency and the pathway to a moral high ground (Korteweg 2003). For example, a guide on low-income programs in Alberta declares: "Albertans value independence. We prefer to make it on our own, without government support. If we need help we want a hand up, not a handout" (AHRE 2002, 1).

This process of explicating the relationship between individual experiences and larger social constructs is called the "mapping" of social relations (Campbell and Gregor 2002, 34). Like Campbell's (2006) institutional-ethnographic analysis of health-care restructuring in one region of Canada, the authors suggest that the kind of analysis presented in this article is critical in the debate around public policy in Canada because Canada, like numerous other Western nations, is shifting "to subtly incorporate a market orientation" (105) in its vision of social policy. Contributing to the debate, this article provides evidence from the standpoint of participant experiences that the predominant focus on human capital development evident in recent social policy trajectories in Canada is insufficient in meeting the policy goal of self-sufficiency.

Data and Method

The authors recruited 26 low-income parents of preschool children from not-for-profit social service agencies, from employability programs, and

through snowball sampling. They did not recruit participants from welfare administrative offices, to ensure that prospective participants understood that the study was not associated with the department that administered social assistance and that participation in it would not affect their welfare benefits. The authors used purposive sampling to select participants making the transition from welfare to employment in the Province of Alberta who were at the beginning of the transition from social assistance to paid work, had at least one preschool child, and had incomes below the Statistics Canada Low Income Cut-Offs (LICOs; before tax).[3] Because participants were selected to facilitate in-depth understanding of a particular phenomenon, these findings are generalizable to the extent that they provide insight into others' experiences in similar contexts or situations (Mayan 2009).

The authors generated data through three in-depth interviews with each participant during the first year of his or her transition from social assistance to employment (May 2001 to October 2002). Interviews were conducted at 6-month intervals: at the beginning of the transition, 6 months into the transition, and 1 year after participants began the transition from welfare to work. Although some participants were skeptical about the purpose of the study at first, over time they began to trust the first author, partially because she interacted with them on multiple occasions and partially because of her openness to engaging in dialogue with them about some aspects of her life (e.g., she was pregnant during the final round of interviews, which provided an opportunity for participants to give advice regarding childbirth and parenting). The authors used semistructured interview guides at each of the three interviews to elicit in-depth descriptions of participants' life stories, their experiences with social assistance and welfare-to-work, and their experiences associated with health, family functioning, and child care. Interviews were audio taped and transcribed verbatim. Preliminary open coding (Strauss and Corbin 1998) was undertaken after the completion of the first set of interviews. As interviews were completed, the authors compared them with previous interviews and adapted questions to check for possible themes. During the last interview, participants were asked what their experience of the study was like, and overwhelmingly, their answers indicated that it had been enjoyable and rewarding (Breitkreuz 2002). As researchers coming from critical, feminist, and praxis-oriented perspectives, the authors remained cognizant of research affect, recognizing that in qualita-

3. Although not an official poverty line, the before-tax LICOs are commonly used to measure poverty rates in Canada. The LICOs are determined by calculating the average percentage of before-tax income spent by Canadian families on food, clothing, and shelter and then adding 20 percent. On average, Canadian families spend 35 percent of their income on food, clothing, and shelter. Thus, when families spend 55 percent or more of their income on food, clothing, and shelter, they are living below the LICOs (Statistics Canada 2004*a*).

tive research the interviewer is the "main instrument for obtaining knowledge" and that the integrity, experience, and knowledge of the researcher influences the quality of the research (Kvale 1996, 117). In addition, the authors engaged in ongoing reflexive processes throughout their research, which entailed "scrupulous and open interrogation of the feminist researchers' own postures, views, and practices" (Olesen 2000, 236) such as their assumptions about poverty, self-sufficiency, and the role of the researcher when interviewing marginalized participants (Breitkreuz 2002).

Data Analysis

After interviews from all three points of data collection were transcribed, the authors conducted rigorous and comprehensive analysis of interview data. In institutional ethnography, data analysis is a process that involves two key phases. The first step involves standard descriptive qualitative analysis procedures in order to ask, "What are these participant experiences telling us?" To achieve rigor in this stage of the analysis, the authors carefully and systematically reviewed the transcripts, extensively documented field notes after each interview, conducted detailed memoing during the review of the transcripts, and engaged in an iterative process of coding, recoding, reviewing, organizing, and thinking through the data (Morse et al. 2002). The data were first clustered by grouping all data from all time points by individual participant, which were then developed into a narrative summary of that individual's experience. The authors then analyzed the data thematically, using the constant comparison method (Strauss and Corbin 1998) to make explicit the implicit connections between the daily lived experiences of study participants and welfare-to-work initiatives. This method involved comparing two or more descriptions of experiences and patterns of behavior or key events and looking for similarities and differences across participants (Miles and Huberman 1994). For example, they were interested in how welfare-to-work affected the health, family-functioning, and child-care experiences of participants, so they began coding data on the basis of these domains. Through a process called axial coding (Strauss and Corbin 1998), the authors discovered interrelationships between codes, and these codes were merged to create comprehensive themes. For example, the codes "sense of purpose," "the impact of increased income," and "breaks isolation" were eventually merged into the theme "the promise," and the codes "human capital," "lack of living wage," "work-family conflict," and "child care" were ultimately merged into the theme "the reality."

The second level of analysis involved a process of looking for "institutional hooks and traces" in the data (McCoy 2006, 111). For an institutional ethnographer, social relations are key to the research interest (Campbell and Gregor 2002). At this level of analysis, the researcher begins with participants' experiences and works backward, recognizing that

"translocal and discursively-organized relations permeate informants' understandings, talk, and activities" (Campbell and Gregor 2002, 90). The key question in this phase of the analysis is, "What are these participant experiences telling us about the processes which shape their lives?" For instance, in reviewing the participant narratives, we began to see how the experiences of participants in accessing child care were much more complex than was shown by simply reviewing the text of child-care policies. Central to this type of analysis, then, is a systematic policy analysis in addition to an in-depth exploration of participant experiences to make the linkages. To this end, we reviewed and analyzed relevant policy documents, including the Supports for Independence Policy Manual, the Alberta Human Resources and Employment website, provincial government annual reports, and brochures and booklets given to welfare recipients, in order to juxtapose the intent of the policies with the accounts of the participants.[4]

Study Participants

Seventeen individuals participated in all three time points of interviews for this study and are the focus of the analysis in this article. Sixteen of the participants were lone mothers, and one was a lone father. All participants received their income from social assistance for at least 6 months at the start of the study. The average age of participants was 29.6 years, with a range between 18 and 41 years. Participants reported an average of two children, with a range between one and six. Seven participants were Aboriginal, and 10 were Caucasian. The average level of academic achievement was grade 11, with a range from grade 7 to 1 year of postsecondary schooling. Nine of the participants lived in subsidized housing, five lived in nonsubsidized rental suites, two lived in supportive housing, and one lived in her deceased parents' house.

All participants in this study were attempting to make the transition from welfare to work. Thirteen of the 17 participated in the Skills for Work program, which provided a variety of employability programs including job-specific skill training, work experience, personal development, and academic upgrading. This program was designed particularly for those who "have had difficulty entering the labour market and who require assistance to join the workforce" (AHRE 2001). The remaining four participants were not in formal welfare-to-work employability programs but were independently looking for employment or taking an upgrading program after being instructed by their financial assistance workers to do so.

4. During the time that this study was conducted, the income support program was called Supports for Independence (SFI). In 2004 the Income and Employment Supports Act was enacted, and a number of income support programs in Alberta were combined under the program Alberta Works.

Like other studies analyzing the health of welfare recipients (Vozoris and Tarasuk 2004; Fortin 2008), there was a high incidence of physical and mental health problems among participants in this study. Almost half of them reported an assortment of physical health problems, including asthma, chronic back pain resulting from injuries, speech problems, pregnancy complications, chronic stomach pain, uterine infections, weight problems, celiac disease, exhaustion, and multiple lung infections. Fifteen of the 17 participants said that they had mental health problems. Eleven mentioned stress and anxiety, particularly surrounding their ongoing income and food insecurity. Other problems related to mental health included panic attacks, personality disorders, eating disorders, learning disabilities, and addictions. Of the various health problems identified by participants, depression was the most common. Thirteen participants reported feeling depressed at some point, and eight participants indicated being medicated for depression.

A limitation in this study was participant attrition, which likely skewed the sample somewhat into those who were more employment ready. Anticipating attrition, the authors oversampled for the first round, interviewing 26 participants. Between the first and the second rounds, nine participants were not reachable and therefore lost to the study, and between the second and the third rounds of interviews, one participant returned to the study, leaving a final sample of 17 participants who participated throughout the year the authors conducted this study. There were three key reasons for participant attrition: three moved to another city, two had their phones disconnected and the authors were unable to contact them through family or friends, and three participants did not return the authors' calls.[5] The highest retention rate was for participants who were recruited from two full-time employability groups (71 percent of the participants from the 12-month group and 83 percent of the participants from the 6-month group completed the study). One explanation for the retention success in the employability groups is that these participants were generally more employment ready than the other participants recruited from other places, suggesting that their lives were more stable, making it easier for the authors to stay in touch. In contrast, the participants from the part-time employability group, which was designed for high-barrier women, and the group of participants who were not in any formal employability groups each had a retention rate of 60 percent.[6] For

5. Over half of the participants had their phones disconnected throughout this study, but through asking for alternate phone numbers for friends and family during the first contact, the authors were able to connect with most participants by other means.

6. Welfare recipients were categorized by their income support workers on the basis of an employment assessment. Recipients were labeled expected to work or not expected to work, and on the basis of this designation they were referred to an appropriate program to assist them with employability, employment, or skills training, or they were instructed to find a job. The authors created the grouping of high-barrier women on the basis of the preemployability program that these women had been placed in through the SFI criteria.

these groups, either multiple barriers or lack of formal supports likely made it more difficult to stay in contact with them.

Results

This section provides both a chronological and thematic presentation of the findings to show the transition from welfare to work, as well as the key ways that ideologically driven policies are evident in the lives of low-income families. Starting with a description of participants' attempts to make the transition from welfare to work, the authors show how at the beginning of participants' transitions, welfare-to-work appeared to offer welfare recipients a chance to leave a life of poverty, what this article refers to as "the promise." The authors then show "the reality" of welfare-to-work, as participants began to search for and attain jobs. The full description and details of this transition are important because it is the nuances of participants' attempts to attain employment that clarify why they were largely unsuccessful in doing so. In this way, this article adds depth and insight into the well-known statistics and descriptive studies regarding ongoing poverty for former welfare recipients. In addition, it shows how the ideology of welfare-to-work policies shapes the day-to-day lives of individuals attempting to achieve self-sufficiency by moving from welfare to employment.

The Promise: Beginning the Transition from Dependency to Self-Sufficiency

During the initial interviews, participants expressed an overall sense of optimism about the future. Contrary to popular conceptions, but consistent with research conducted in the United States (Seccombe et al. 1999; Scott, London, and Edin 2000; Monroe and Tiller 2001; Anderson and Van Hoy 2006; Scott, London, and Gross 2007), participants accepted the discourse of self-sufficiency and wanted to be part of the mainstream. Most resented the pressure from income support workers to engage in work-related programs, experienced some nervousness about attending the programs, worried about how their children would make the transition to day care, and were anxious about managing transportation for themselves and their children. Nevertheless, the majority acknowledged the benefits of attending the programs and overwhelmingly indicated it to be a positive move forward. Their accounts show that attending programs offered hope, connection, activity, structure, security, and purpose in their lives, together forming what the authors conceptualize as "the promise."

Study participants indicated that the programs gave them an opportunity to interact with other adults, reducing the social isolation they experienced while at home full time. The programs also gave them a sense of moving forward, in turn giving them hope for the future. The promise of

welfare-to-work is captured in the following excerpts: "I know, once I'm done [with my program], I'll be able to go out there full force and get a job, no problem. I feel more confident now, in the what, 7 weeks that I've been in the program, than I have in a long time" (Tamara).[7] "Oh yeah, you're guaranteed a job. And if not, they have a year follow-up as well, so they'll help you if you can't find a job" (Natalia).

The dominant discourse of market citizenship is evident in these quotations. In welfare-to-work programs, participants attend employability programs in order to enhance their job readiness and find employment to move them from being "passive" welfare recipients to "active" (Gorlick and Brethour 2002, 140) and engaged employees. Leah Vosko (1999) makes a compelling argument suggesting that one of the implicit goals of welfare-to-work is to teach welfare recipients to accept the instability of the new labor market. Jonathan Murphy (1997) provides evidence for this argument, citing early training programs in Alberta, one of which offered a 1-day seminar by Tony Robbins, the guru of positive thinking. Robbins's contract was not renewed, however, because an external evaluator criticized the program in which welfare recipients chanted slogans such as "anything is possible" and "I am responsible for my actions" (Murphy 1997, 114). Although this program was discontinued, the ongoing emphasis on the notion that any job is a good job suggests that there is some merit to the assertion that an unstated but clear goal of employability programs is to teach participants to accept the status quo and to individualize barriers to employment (Broughton 2003). This individual focus provides an incomplete picture of the barriers to employment by failing to consider structural conditions such as low-paid, precarious jobs without benefits (Vosko et al. 2003; Vosko 2006), inadequate public transportation options (Seccombe et al. 1999; Litt et al. 2000), and a lack of quality and affordable child-care centers that fit with their scheduling needs (Seccombe et al. 1999). The findings below show the struggles with the promise and the reality of welfare-to-work, explicating some of these structural barriers.

Struggles with the promise.—The participants not in a formal employability program were generally less optimistic about their future at the beginning of the transition. They worried more than the others that it might be difficult to find full-time work that could provide a living wage and fit with the needs of their preschool children. Samantha, for instance, recognized that welfare-to-work programs would likely lead to low-paying jobs without benefits and that it was more difficult for women to earn enough to make ends meet. "I don't ever want to have to rely on a man. I want to be able to make enough. Unfortunately women don't, so you have to find some sort of a career that you can make money at and have your benefits because you really need benefits, you know" (Samantha).

7. All names used here are pseudonyms.

Samantha struggled to find a program that would both result in full-time employment with a living wage and fit with her responsibilities as a single parent. In addition, Samantha, like some other participants, also wanted to be free from financial dependence on a spouse. Similarly, Ellen Scott, Andrew London, and Glenda Gross (2007) found that their participants defined self-sufficiency as freedom from both the state and a male breadwinner. Samantha indicated that she wished to be a nurse but realized that the shift work involved would not fit with her parenting role. Eventually, she chose a paralegal program. Similarly, Karen recognized that full-time employment was difficult to find and felt that she might have to work two part-time jobs to earn enough money to survive.

Here, the everyday organization of participants' lives, in particular the actualities of their limited employment opportunities and complex child-care requirements, did not fit with the prevailing discourse that employment leads to self-sufficiency. Still, this group, like those in formal programs, hoped to find employment, achieve self-sufficiency, and permanently end their reliance on social assistance benefits. In short, they accepted and incorporated the discourse of the relations of ruling into the work of their everyday lives, despite their challenges in meeting its promise of self-sufficiency.

Money buys happiness.—The most important factor contributing to the hopefulness of welfare-to-work participants was that, for 10 of the 17 participants, the income source changed from social assistance to student-finance grant funding for the duration of the program. The Students Finance Program was available to welfare recipients through recommendation from an authorized official from Alberta Human Resources and Employment in order to engage in a variety of academic upgrading programs, including secondary upgrading to complete high school requirements and adult education (Gorlick and Brethour 2001).[8] The change in source of income had a two-pronged effect. First, it elevated participants' status from welfare recipient to student. Compared to the substantial surveillance they experienced while collecting social assistance, a student-finance income meant increased autonomy and decreased stigma. Indeed, Dana described this experience as positive because, in addition to "doing something" and receiving more money, she was no longer required to fill out client cards. The second effect of having student-finance funding was a noteworthy increase in income. A single parent with one child, for example, could earn approximately $1,200 per month on student-finance funding, compared to approximately $950 per month from social

8. Although there are limited data regarding how many welfare recipients were transferred to this program overall, it is estimated that approximately 11,000 cases (12 percent) were transferred from social assistance to student-finance funding when welfare reform began in Alberta in 1993 (Faid 2009).

assistance. The increase in income enabled participants to pay outstanding bills, save money for the future, and purchase needed household, clothing, and food items. For instance, when Tamara was asked what it felt like to move from social assistance to student finance, she quickly replied: "I almost feel like a queen." With student-finance funding, participants had enough income to meet basic needs as well as engage in occasional recreational pursuits. Specifically, participants described buying better clothes so they felt presentable in public, taking their children to eat out once a month, going swimming or to movies on occasion, and not having to say no to their children all of the time. A few participants were even able to save some money each month, putting it away for future bouts of income insecurity, which most of them anticipated despite their optimism about obtaining employment and leaving social assistance permanently.

Trudy, a mother of four who moved from a preemployability program to an academic upgrading program that qualified her for student-finance funding, described in detail the positive effect of student-finance funding on her financial situation:

> When I was on welfare, I felt bad because I had no money and . . . I'd have to explain to [my children] that we need every dollar. What are we gonna eat? We can't live on junk food. I would have to do all this explaining, and I don't find that right. Having to explain to my children . . . this is what we need the money for, and this is what we need the money for, and this is what we need the money for. There are some things that they can't even buy, and then my daughter wants it so bad. And then it's like, well what are we gonna do? Are we gonna eat the toy? So, now, because of the funding . . . it's a lot better, money-wise.

Although participants continued to have relatively low incomes, the difference in the amount of income between social assistance and student finance was enough to considerably enhance the quality of their lives and enable greater participation in society.

Experiences with student finance show ideological processes penetrating the lives of participants. The elimination of stigma through a simple change of income source underscores the notion of deserving and undeserving poor. Although student finance is still, in essence, money from the public purse, it is considered a more respectable form of income, leading to a respectable outcome of increased human capital and a promising future. Ultimately, however, the status and benefits of this income increase did not continue after student-finance funding concluded and the promise was not fulfilled. Instead, the reality set in when the majority of participants were unable to facilitate secure attachment to the labor market and found themselves in continued poverty.

The Reality: Making the Transition to Work

While the beginning of the welfare-to-work transition meant an optimistic outlook for most participants, the remainder of the transition intro-

duced diversity among their experiences. These differences seemed to be associated with the extent to which job searches yielded positive results and how employability programs or work affected the day-to-day functioning of the participants' families, including work-family integration, child-care arrangements, day-to-day scheduling, transportation issues, and general organization of the day (see Breitkreuz et al. [2010] for a detailed description of the mundane daily struggles of participants). Consistent with similar research conducted in the United States (Scott et al. 2004), the promise of self-sufficiency through welfare-to-work was not fulfilled for these participants, the majority of whom continued to experience income and food insecurity, stigma, and social exclusion (see Breitkreuz and Williamson 2006).

This section details the employment and income outcomes of participants, which play a central role in a person's ability to be financially self-sufficient. Through detailed descriptions of participants' successes and failures in finding employment, the limited success of welfare-to-work becomes clearer. In addition to employment, the authors focus on participants' experiences with child care because of the centrality of this issue in participants' description of their daily work in attempting to become self-sufficient. Although child care is largely absent from the dominant discourse on barriers to employment, accessible and affordable child care is critical in determining whether a parent will be able to sustain employment (Harris 1996; Meyers 1997). The findings below show how the work of parenting and procuring child care in low-income families made it very difficult, if not at times impossible, for participants to maintain employment.

Employment outcomes.—At the end of 1 year, nine of the participants (53 percent) in this study had some type of employment, four of whom obtained full-time jobs: one in construction, the second in retail, the third from home, and the fourth in a legal assistant position. Their annual salaries ranged from $14,360 to $18,000. Two of these four participants had benefits packages, and three of the four worked regular hours. The other five participants obtained part-time employment: two in housekeeping, one as a temporary teacher's aide, one as a receptionist, and one as a nursing-home attendant. Three of these positions had nonstandard hours, and wages ranged from $6.00 to $13.00 per hour. The nursing-home attendant and the two participants with housekeeping jobs still received earnings supplements through social assistance because their earnings were below the cutoff established by social-assistance policies.

At the end of the 1-year transition, the remaining eight participants (47 percent of sample) were not employed, even after going through welfare-to-work programming. Although the sample is not intended to be statistically representative of outcomes in employability programs, it is interesting to note that the percentage of this study's participants still on social assistance at the end of the study closely mirrors the statistic given by the

Government of Alberta for the Skills to Work program with a reported success rate of 54 percent (46 percent not employed; AHRE 2002).[9]

Outcomes in family income.—Of the 17 participants, seven (41 percent) reported an increase in income from the beginning to the end of the year. Loreen stated that her income increased while on social assistance because an additional child moved in with her. Carla also reported that her income increased substantially when she reconciled with her husband and thereby benefited from his earnings in addition to hers. This is not surprising, as marriage is not only a significant factor in assisting women in leaving welfare but also contributes to increased economic well-being once off welfare (Frenette and Picot 2003), perhaps even more than employment (Hunsley 1997).

The reported increases in the other five participants' incomes were due to their employment earnings. However, Mel was unsure whether his job would continue past the summer, and Carrie still required a supplement from social assistance. Karen and Penny only slightly increased their earnings, from approximately $900–$1,000 per month on social assistance to $1,280 per month working full time. Only one participant, Samantha, appeared to have a relatively stable and secure job in which she earned a net market income of $18,000 per year.

Six (35 percent) participants' reported that their incomes increased for 6–12 months during the year they were interviewed (five due to student-finance funding and one because of a temporary job placement through her welfare-to-work program) and then decreased again at the end of the program when they did not obtain jobs. The incomes of four (24 percent) other participants did not change. Of these four, one moved from student finance to a full-time job, one went onto Employment Insurance for a maternity leave, and the other two remained on social assistance.

The findings show that even though social assistance incomes were clearly not sufficient to meet families' needs, neither were the market-derived incomes attainable for those with limited education and jobs skills. The majority of participants in this study (13 of 17) did not surpass the LICOs, even those with employment. Not surprisingly, three of the four participants with reported incomes above the LICOs were employed full time. Importantly, though, only one participant had employment income above the LICOs. The other three would have fallen below the LICOs if not for the Child Tax Benefit of approximately $2,400 per child per year. The actualities of these participants' incomes, despite their veritable attempts to attain self-sufficiency, show that the claims of a market citizenship model to mollify risk through labor force attachment fall short for those on the margins of the workforce.

9. The government only tracked participants 3–6 months postintervention; however, evidence from other studies in Canada and the United States indicates that in the longer term, more than half of welfare leavers return to welfare (Harris 1996; Meyer and Cancian 1996; Michalopoulos et al. 2002; Frenette and Picot 2003).

The experiences of a woman named Sarah poignantly illustrate the challenges of shifting from social assistance to employment and the limitations of the concept of self-sufficiency. A 40-year-old woman with a 2-year-old child, Sarah had a lengthy employment record working as a cook in oil camps. She went onto social assistance when she became pregnant, and after her daughter was born she was unable to return to her previous job, as it required living in isolated locations for much of the year. She also developed a chronic back injury, which precluded her from doing the heavy work required in her previous job. A few months after the authors first interviewed Sarah, she obtained a job as a short-order cook working in a cafeteria. She worked 5 days a week, 5 hours a day, making $7.00 per hour, $1.10 per hour above minimum wage. She grossed approximately $700 per month. She had to travel via public transportation a total of 3 hours per day to and from her job. This job was temporary because Sarah was an interim worker during a strike, and when the strike ended, Sarah's job was terminated. Even though Sarah had a lengthy employment history, earned more than minimum wage in her current job, and put in a full day (working, commuting, and transporting her child to and from day care), she was not economically better off than when her sole income was derived from social assistance. The goal of self-sufficiency remained elusive, despite substantial effort. Sarah's experience, similar to other participants in the study, illustrates some of the structural barriers to self-sufficiency. Her story also resonates with Seth Klein and Barbara Montgomery's (2001) conclusion that welfare reform provides a surplus labor supply for low-skill employment.

Participants' day-to-day struggles with earning income provide insights into their inability to attain higher-paying jobs and reflect the social organization of work in current neoliberal market economies. The incomes of the vast majority of participants did not exceed the low-income cutoffs because of a combination of hourly wages and number of hours worked. Although some participants reported that they earned as much as $13.00 per hour, most of the participants who obtained jobs reported making less than $10.00 per hour. Furthermore, most of the participants did not have full-time work, which is consistent with what is known about the realities of the low-wage labor market. Nonstandard work in neoliberal economies is common and is characterized by insecure, temporary, part-time, seasonal work with irregular hours, no benefits, and no union protection (Armstrong 1996; Saunders 2005; Vosko 2006). It is not surprising, then, that participants continued to live in poverty, even when they obtained jobs. These findings are consistent with other research documenting the realities of those leaving the welfare rolls (Michalopoulos et al. 2002; Frenette and Picot 2003). Findings from the Self-Sufficiency Project, for instance, show that after the income subsidy ended, 80 percent of participants in both the program and the control groups were living below the LICOs (Michalopoulos et al. 2002).

In the daily work of the participants, the external social, economic, and political organization can be seen in action. The dominant belief structure framing contemporary social assistance policies that the market will prevail pushes participants to attain income through labor market attachment. Furthermore, the neoliberal assumption that the market is the best place to gain security (Teeple 2000) requires welfare recipients to try and attain this security, even when their experiences of employment and subsequent income do not live up to that message. In short, there is a disconnect between the claims of the dominant discourse and what the reality was for the participants of this study, despite participants' initial optimism about what welfare-to-work programs could do to help them attain employment.

Factors beyond Employment: Child Care and the Work Outside the Work

In addition to examining participants' employment and income trajectories, the authors conducted an in-depth exploration of the everyday experiences surrounding work. Part of the challenge for welfare recipients in finding and maintaining employment clearly has to do with factors extending beyond employment. Such factors, constituting the daily grind, include transportation, scheduling, and, most important, child care (Breitkreuz et al. 2010). Indeed, other issues are often subsumed by child-care considerations, since if parents are required to work, they have to find care for those children. Because welfare-to-work participants are likely to obtain low-paying jobs with irregular hours, accessibility and affordability of child care are critical in determining whether a parent will be able to sustain employment after welfare (Meyers 1997; Mason 2003). Even with full child-care subsidies, child care continues to be a barrier to employment (McMullin et al. 2002; Mason 2003; Breitkreuz et al. 2010), leading to unstable "patchworks" of child-care arrangements (Scott, London, and Hurst 2005, 370).

Research conducted on low-income employed mothers suggests that the burdens of care are disproportionately more complex for families in poverty than for other families (Solomon 2001; Mason 2003). Furthermore, policies to enhance labor force attachment of welfare recipients do not adequately address the unpaid work that happens on the edges of a paid work day such as the day-to-day child care, travel, housework, and the procurement of food (McMullin et al. 2002; Mason 2003; Gazso 2007; Gurnstein et al. 2008), what the authors refer to as "the work outside the work" (Breitkreuz et al. 2010, 55). This work took considerable time and energy for participants, making it difficult for them to procure or sustain employment and become self-sufficient (Breitkreuz et al. 2010). Child care was particularly important because of its centrality in enabling parents to maintain employment and work toward self-sufficiency.

Recognizing that child-care concerns are a considerable barrier to employment, the Government of Alberta provides full child-care subsidies for low- and middle-income parents, including those moving from welfare to work. During the time in which this study was conducted, low-income families were eligible for subsidies of up to $475 for a child up to 19 months and $380 for a child 19 months or older (Government of Alberta 2002).[10] If parents chose child care that cost more than the subsidy amount, they were required to pay the difference, referred to as the parent portion.

Demonstrating the relevance of the child-care subsidy, all 17 participants in this study had their children in full-time, licensed day-care facilities at some point during data collection, most for the entire duration of the study. All participants reported a full-time subsidy during their time in an employability program or working. Even though the majority of the participants chose their day care for location and availability rather than quality, most of them indicated that they were satisfied with their child-care arrangements and that their children benefited from the social interaction, structure, and activities available in day care. Yet, challenges emerged in child care that merit further analysis, as they show the ways in which theoretically sound policies actually play out in the daily existence of families and highlight shortcomings that work against the goal of self-sufficiency.

The following excerpt from an interview with Samantha highlights a number of key issues that low-income parents in this study faced when looking for quality child care. "I wanted a quality day care where he's going to learn and grow and prosper. And that is something that really bothers me, like you have to pay money to get into a good day care. So if you're a low-income person, you get a low-income day care, and that sucks because children are worth it. Children are worth a high quality day care, all of them, they should all be high quality day cares. . . . It's not right that a single parent . . . or a low-income family, has to choose a shitty day care." Here, Samantha suggests that accessibility to quality child care depends on the ability to pay for it. Indeed, there is a notable gap between child-care subsidies and the cost of quality child care in Alberta. The average cost for a spot in a child-care center during the time of this study was $523 per month (Doherty, Friendly, and Beach 2003). Already, a subsidized space was $43 short of the average cost, and when looking at the costs of reputed high-quality urban day care, the gap became even more pronounced, as the cost of care in these centers was approximately $900 per month. Even with a full subsidy of $475, a parent would have to provide an additional $424 to pay for the child-care spot. For low-income parents, this parent portion was prohibitive, suggesting that Samantha was

10. Since conducting this study, child-care subsidies increased to $628.00 for a child 0–19 months and $546.00 for a child 19 months and up (Government of Alberta 2010).

right in asserting that low-income parents must choose cheap, and by extension, lower-quality child care.

Carla's story shows that even when the child-care subsidy covers most of the costs, child-care expenses can still be prohibitive for low-income workers. The first time the authors interviewed Carla, who is a mother of three children, she had a part-time retail job for which she worked 5 hours per day, 5 days per week, at a reported wage of $6.25 per hour. She thus earned a daily gross income of $31.25 per day, or $156.25 per week. She said that she did not collect any social assistance when she worked at this job because she did not want to be on government assistance. Carla's oldest two children were in day care, for which she received a child-care subsidy. However, to make up the difference between the subsidy amount and the child-care fees, she paid an additional $2.00 per day per child. Her youngest child was too young to qualify for the day care in the area in which Carla resided, so she stayed with a relative, whom Carla paid $15.00 per day. So, Carla's total child-care costs, with subsidy, came to $19.00 per day, or $380 per month. For three preschool children, this was inexpensive child care. However, after paying child-care costs, Carla's 5-hour workday yielded a gross income of $12.25 per day, or $245 per month of net market income. Child-care costs, even with a substantial subsidy for two children, cost Carla just over 60 percent of her total market income.

The problems with child care uncovered in this study also demonstrate how problems with child care are not solely financial. Karen, for example, was a young mother who found employment for 25 hours per week at a retail store at $6.00 per hour. During the year the authors interviewed Karen, she continued in this job and eventually worked 40 hours per week, increasing her wage to $8.00 per hour. She received a full subsidy for her child care. However, her hours of work were from 4:00 p.m. to 12:00 a.m. 4 weekdays and 1 weekend day per week, and her day care was only open from 6:00 a.m. until 6:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. So, the subsidized child care that she qualified for only partially met her child-care needs. Instead, Karen's mother, with whom Karen and her son lived, provided the majority of child care for Karen, despite her full subsidy. Furthermore, subsidized parents were required to use the spot for a minimum of 50 hours per month to qualify for a subsidy (Gorlick and Brethour 2001). In the case of Karen, this meant that she took her son to day care earlier than she needed to in order to maintain minimal hours of day-care use and thereby qualify for the subsidy. The day care only covered 3 hours per day, or 12 of the 25–40 hours per week that Karen actually worked.

This policy demonstrates a lack of understanding about the reality of those requiring subsidized day care. Given that low-income workers are likely to work part-time shift work in temporary jobs with rotating schedules (Shillington 1998; Vosko 2006), they require a full-time subsidy because they cannot predict when they will have to work. A part-time sub-

sidy would only give a parent access to specific days of the week that are unlikely to coincide with their work schedules. For instance, day cares that provide part-time spots require the child to attend either Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays or Tuesdays and Thursdays. This regimented schedule clashes with the needs of parents who work irregular hours.

The stories above illustrate the disconnect between the realities of low-income work and child-care policies designed to remove the barrier to employment for low-income parents. Using a dynamic systems perspective, Hirokazu Yoshikawa and JoAnn Hsueh (2001) argue that it is important to look at how various systems are connected and consider the possible interactions, intended and unintended, of one system on another. Given that child care is still a barrier for low-income workers even with full subsidies (McMullin et al. 2002; Mason 2003; Breitkreuz et al. 2010), further thought is required to address veritable child-care challenges for employees in low-wage, nonstandard work. Alberta made some effort to address some of these barriers in recent policy adaptations. Financial reimbursement is now available for child care offered through relatives (kin child care), and provisions have been made for greater subsidy in the case in which parents require extended hours of child care on weekends or evenings (Government of Alberta 2009). But in the government's attempt to find ways to help families negotiate both employment and child care to promote self-sufficiency, two issues remain unaddressed: conflicting hours between parents' employment schedules and available child care, and child-care quality, particularly for children cared for in unlicensed child-care settings.

In summary, the findings from this study indicate that policies built on the assumption that welfare recipients are better off when self-sufficient are ultimately uninformed because they are divorced from the day-to-day realities of participants' lives. This study followed welfare recipients as they adopted the discourse of self-sufficiency, put considerable effort into achieving it, but were still unable to accomplish this goal, in part due to individual barriers such as their limited employability skills and in part due to structural barriers such as the limitations of the labor market and lack of affordable and accessible child-care options that fit with their complex employment situations. In short, the promise that welfare-to-work participants will achieve self-sufficiency via employment was offset by the reality for the majority of participants: that employment and income did not notably improve and economic independence remained an unrealized goal.

The Standardization of Experience through Text

Key to an institutional ethnographic analysis is an examination of the texts of the relations of ruling through the standpoints of participants because, as Nancy Fraser (1989) argues, in bureaucratic systems, "expe-

rienced situations and life problems are translated into administrable needs; and since the latter are not necessarily isomorphic to the former, the possibility of a gap between them arises" (155). The form used to create an employment plan for welfare recipients in Alberta is an excellent example of a text used to establish relations of ruling, to create normative expectations and standardize individuals' experiences. The analysis of this standard and seemingly innocuous form shows how, through the standardization of experiences, the individuals' situations become diluted, and the experiences become, in effect, invisible.

All welfare recipients who are classified as expected to work (ETW), with the exception of self-employed individuals and those employed full time with insufficient earnings, are required to complete an Employment Plan with their workers (Alberta Family and Social Services 1993*b*, SSA 2104-02, 1). Interestingly, those not expected to work (NETW) for temporary designations such as disability, health concerns, or family care responsibilities are still required to complete an Employment Plan (SSA 2104-02, 1), showing that those who are not expected to work now may be expected to work in the future. In other words, the designations of ETW and NETW are fluid, temporary, and subject to change.

The plan clearly outlines these expectations for clients: "I know I must actively look for work, keep records of my job search efforts, and take any job; I know if I do not do what this plan requires my SFI [Supports for Independence] benefits may stop" (Alberta Family and Social Services 1993*a*, SFI-06-2104-01). The SFI worker is required to highlight the "client's responsibility to follow through on the steps outlined," reminding the client of the possible consequences of failing to do so. The completion directions for the form explain that the purpose of the Employment Plan is to "establish the client's commitment to the steps required to achieve independence" (SFI-06-2104-02).

The extralocal expectation of market citizenship via labor market attachment is evident in the text of the form, and the penalty for not following through is clearly stated. But what is missing in this plan reveals more than what is there; the Employment Plan does not recognize the potentially enormous challenge in meeting the employment goals. While it leaves room to outline some of the steps relevant to finding child care, going to counseling, or applying for student funding, it neither recognizes nor resolves issues like how to reconcile the hours of child care available through a credible child-care center with a job that requires evening and night work. Nor does it allow for practical time issues, like how to get laundry done in a laundromat while working full time, caring for children, and trying to get adequate rest. Thus, completing this form seems analogous to making an appointment with a travel agent to plan a trip overseas when a person has no money to fund the trip, no passport, and a fear of flying. The form can be completed, but it will not address the holes that need filling before a satisfactory result can occur.

In summary, the concepts of self-sufficiency and employability described by administrative texts do not accurately reflect the day-to-day realities of study participants trying to move from welfare to work. Through the standardization of needs in the text of SFI policies, the day-to-day realities of participants' lives were often rendered invisible, showing the lack of connection between policy claims and lived experience.

Discussion and Conclusions

In this study, the authors show how, through the standpoint of participants' lives, the daily experiences of welfare recipients are embedded within broader ideological and policy constructs. Specifically, this article juxtaposes the experiences of study participants with claims from an active social policy orientation, showing that neither the employability programs nor the pressure to find work propelled welfare recipients toward self-sufficiency. Participants viewed welfare-to-work programs as the promise of a better life, an optimism that was affirmed by experiences in employability programs in which they experienced social interaction, structured days, a sense of purpose, and increased income through student-finance funding (for those who qualified). However, the reality set in when the majority of participants were unable to attain secure attachment to the labor market, finding themselves in continued poverty. Although a few of the jobs showed promise of providing some job security and a living wage, most appeared to be dead ends, and almost half of the participants still received social assistance (two in another province) at the conclusion of this study. The authors also found that welfare-to-work programs had consequences beyond employment, as the work outside paid employment took considerable time, energy, and planning, which could be overwhelming. Moreover, child care posed barriers, even with child-care subsidy, because employment was often incompatible with child-care availability. Overall, for participants who obtained employment and for those who did not, the future remained precarious.

This study reveals the ideological processes that are manifest in, and shape, the daily lives of welfare recipients. As demonstrated by participant narratives, the institutional processes of welfare show that active welfare-to-work social policy creates a framework in which participants' lives must fit. Participants are required to find a way to integrate work and family with a low-paying job with nonstandard hours. That the child care available to them does not coincide with their jobs or their day-to-day needs is not part of the dominant discourse, nor is the reality that their jobs are not likely to reduce their poverty or advance their family well-being. The end result is continued income insecurity for the welfare recipient and failure in the policy platform.

The narratives of study participants call into question basic assumptions of self-sufficiency, showing that the predominant belief that any job

is a good job and that a job will eventually move a welfare recipient out of poverty is problematic. Grounded in classic liberal philosophy, the notion of self-sufficiency maintains a "rational and economic view of personhood" (Daugherty and Barber 2001, 662) without adequately considering other aspects of the individual, like his or her social relationships, civic responsibilities, and citizenship obligations. The concept of self-sufficiency assumes an individualistic, gender-neutral reality in which an autonomous employee is disengaged from other responsibilities, obligations, or complexities of daily life. It carries undertones of the self-made man, an individual (usually male) who rises to the top without any support or assistance from others (Breitkreuz 2005). The notion that "caring activity is marginal and residual, to be fitted in around the requirements of paid employment" (Baker and Tippin 1999, 56) is implicit, but how this caring work can be realistically achieved is not considered. It overlooks the actuality that any successful individual achieves success within a complex web of often invisible and unrecognized assistance and support from spouses, families, friends, and children. Ironically, self-sufficiency is achieved only through considerable dependence on others.

This study shows that moving welfare recipients into employment is much more complex than simply creating policies that require it. In the process of reducing the multifaceted lives of welfare recipients into the requirement to be self-sufficient, individual experiences are watered down, rendering them in many instances invisible. Active social policy turns attention away from need, recasting labor market attachment as a central criterion for entitlement to publicly funded benefits and programs, but the result is continued vulnerability and poverty for already marginalized families. Consequently, the intended outcomes of welfare-to-work policies, which may appear realistic and reasonable at first glance, are more difficult to achieve than first imagined by policy makers. No longer able to count on the ever-diminishing welfare state for income support, welfare-to-work participants are required to turn to the labor market, only to find themselves at another dead end in their search for economic security. So, paradoxically, the active welfare state can paralyze welfare recipients who cannot achieve self-sufficiency within their current economic, social, and political environments. Self-sufficiency is a conceptual trap in which welfare recipients find themselves ensnared.

That continued poverty is inevitable for many former welfare recipients even when they obtain employment suggests that policy makers' current preoccupation with self-sufficiency needs to be rethought. In line with a life-first approach that prioritizes "the life needs of the individual above any obligation to work" (Dean 2003, 456), the authors suggest reorienting policy toward interdependence, rather than the labor market attachment of welfare recipients. Specifically, the authors draw on Ann Robertson's "moral economy of interdependence" (1998, 1427), which originates in the concept of a moral economy. Deborah Stone (1984) explains that "the

moral economy of a society is its set of beliefs about what constitutes just exchange: not only about how economic exchange is to be conducted in normal times but also . . . when poor individuals are entitled to social aid, when better-off people are obligated to provide aid, and what kinds of claims anyone—landowners, employers, governments—can legitimately make on the surplus product of anyone else" (19).

Robertson (1998) summarizes this definition, suggesting that the "moral economy is as much about our obligations to one another as it is about the claims we are entitled to make against each other" (1426), and describes the subsistence ethic of peasant societies in which community members believe that all persons are entitled to available resources. She argues that the concept of moral economy can also be applied to contemporary societies because moral economy, as described by Stone, is really about "the boundary between work and need" (Stone 1984, 19). Relating the concept of moral economy to the modern welfare state, Robertson suggests that the central moral issue is, "When does need entitle people to make a claim against the collective?" (1998, 1426). Through institutionalizing "shared assumptions of reciprocity," Robertson (1997, 434) posits that the welfare state in contemporary society "represents an administrative attempt to extend this concept of interdependence to 'the strangers at my door'" (437; quote within quote is from Ignatieff [1984]).

A more informed social policy approach could be achieved by rethinking self-sufficiency using Robertson's blueprint. Focusing on interconnectedness, the moral economy of interdependence transcends the dichotomy of dependence and independence characteristic of self-sufficiency, as evident in Alberta's SFI policies guiding social assistance, as well as general social policy discourse (i.e., active social policy as an international trend). Thinking in interdependent terms would entail recognizing that labor force attachment alone cannot eliminate state dependence for some families. Rather, some groups of people, such as low-income single parents with preschool children, may require income support during particular phases of the life course, and others require it indefinitely.

Policies that better reflect the complexity of people's day-to-day lives might offer several tiers of support. These layers would recognize the abilities of some to participate in education and training, while still maintaining both temporary and permanent income support for those unable to fully participate in the labor market. Other studies develop the possibilities of a multifaceted approach in more detail (see, e.g., Banting 2005; Battle, Mendelson, and Torjman 2006). Thinking in these terms would build in recognition for income support for some families at certain phases of their lives (such as during a health crisis or a relationship breakup). This approach would also entail recognition that self-sufficiency, while attainable for many, is not within reach for all people, all of the time. To deny this reality not only leads to policy breakdown, such as

welfare-to-work programs that do not assist participants to achieve self-sufficiency in any meaningful sense, but also begs a moral question about how society treats vulnerable citizens. Using the concept of interdependence to replace self-sufficiency in the development of labor market attachment policy would better reflect the reality of society: everyone lives within a web of interconnections, mutual obligations, and competing demands among employment, family, and care responsibilities. Until this reality is fully acknowledged in developing employability policies for welfare recipients, viable social policy will continue to fall short.

Note

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Book Reviews

From Task-Centered Social Work to Evidence-Based and Integrative Practice: Reflections on History and Implementation. Edited by Tina L. Rzepnicki, Stanley G. McCracken, and Harold E. Briggs. Chicago: Lyceum Books, 2012. Pp. 240. $44.95 (paper).

From Task-Centered Social Work to Evidence-Based and Integrative Practice emerged from a symposium of faculty and graduates on the development of social work practice as part of the centennial celebration of the School of Social Service Administration at the University of Chicago. This book largely avoids the fate of many conference volumes, as it is coherent and focused, though to a great extent it is two separate works: the first part emphasizes conceptual advances, and the second focuses on efforts to introduce and sustain evidence-based practice (EBP) within service organizations.

In the first chapter, Jeanne Marsh emphasizes the need for both instrumental (empirical) and conceptual (theoretical) knowledge in social work, setting a valuable yet limiting tone for the rest of the volume. She acknowledges the restrictions of EBP as it is typically discussed, noting that the research on which practice might be based often does not exist or is not accessible to practitioners. However, she stresses that the real challenges are much more complex. The EBP process, as she defines it, includes three fundamental elements: best available evidence (research), practitioner knowledge and judgment, and client values and expectations. All of these elements are present in standard definitions of EBP (see, e.g., Eileen Gambrill, "Evidence-Based Practice and Policy: Choices Ahead," *Research on Social Work Practice* 16, no. 3 [2006]: 338–57), but, as Marsh notes, nearly all of the focus in teaching EBP has been on accessing research using electronic databases. (The lack of open access to those databases and much of the professional literature by social work practitioners once they leave school is a separate but critical problem with important ethical implications that I wish had been raised here and elsewhere in this volume.) As Marsh explains, far less work is done to ensure that practitioners "know what knowledge is relevant when" (10) or to clarify how to use this knowledge and incorporate client values and expectation. Marsh cites extensive evidence that common factors shared by many treatment approaches better account for the outcome than do specific evidence-based techniques (e.g., William Borden, "Taking Multiplicity Seriously: Pluralism, Pragmatism, and Integrative Perspectives in Social Work Practice," in *Reshaping Theory in Contemporary Social Work*, ed. William Borden, 3–27 [New York: Columbia University Press, 2010]). Furthermore, given the complexity of social work cases, research results almost never map neatly onto practice; theory is required to determine what fits and how, to understand possibilities and obstacles, and to shape intervention processes over time. Marsh's discussion of these areas is elegantly presented and highly per-

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suasive, and I believe her argument for theory as a necessary addition to research results is critically important.

At the same time, the focus of the chapter is largely limited to psychotherapeutic intervention. This is true of the following three chapters as well, which I find troubling as social work is large and diverse. The exploration of such process factors as EBP in social work, where practice goes well beyond psychotherapy, has hardly begun. Even more challenging than this, how to ensure that client values and expectations are met is, as Marsh notes, "largely undeveloped" (12). Marsh herself states in an editorial that the organizing value of the social work profession is social justice (Jeanne C. Marsh, "Social Justice: Social Work's Organizing Value," *Social Work* 50, no. 4 [2005]: 293–94), and she repeats that here. Yet there is very little discussion of a justice-oriented perspective in this chapter, or indeed elsewhere in this volume. The arguments of structural social work, anti-oppressive social work, and related approaches are essential to resisting absorption into a larger culture shot through with structural injustice.

In chapter 2, Anne E. Fortune integrates two previous presentations, on the history of empirical clinical practice in the United States and the development of the task-centered model in social work. Even though this area is well studied, Fortune's engaging presentation is likely to offer something new or long forgotten to most readers. She notes that outside of social work, most recent intervention research focuses on specific problems (with a heavy emphasis on specific DSM [*Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*] diagnoses). As social work moved into the mainstream in the late 1980s and early 1990s, funded social work research too generally targeted specific problems, often as defined by other professions, without attention to more general theoretical or even empirical models of practice. At present, in Fortune's words, "there are multiple evidence-supported interventions for narrowly defined problems, while many of the popular social work interventions have not been tested" (19). This is a serious issue, as many social work clients experience multiple, complex, and interlocking problems (and, I should note, oppressions) for which evidence-based guidelines offer little comprehensive assistance.

Fortune's discussion of the progress task-centered practice has made is equally well presented. There is no question that task-centered practice has made enormous contributions to social work practice, including the development of widely applicable techniques like the task planning and implementation sequence, as well as a general model of practice that has demonstrated utility with a considerable array of problems in living. But, as a problem-focused approach, it risks focusing on managing problems rather than on constructional approaches for reaching goals (Israel Goldiamond, "Toward a Constructional Approach to Social Problems: Ethical and Constitutional Issues Raised by Applied Behavior Analysis," *Behavior and Social Issues* 11 [2002]: 108–97). Aaron Rosen and Enola Proctor suggest target-focused practice as an alternative to problem-focused work, an alternative that deserves attention and that can draw on many task-centered methods (Aaron Rosen and Enola Proctor, eds., *Developing Practice Guidelines for Social Work Intervention* [New York: Columbia University Press, 2003]). Space precludes a full discussion of the limits of task-centered practice, but I will note that Gambrill's 1994 critique in the pages of this journal raises important caveats (Eileen Gambrill, "What's in a Name? Task-Centered, Empirical, and Behavioral Practice," *Social Service Review* 68, no. 4 [1994]: 578–99). Gambrill argues that over several decades task-centered practice became increasingly behavioral in its interventions, without incorporating the underlying theoretical basis. Such an approach can limit practitioners to technical application, without clarity regarding when and how adaptations are most likely to be helpful or damaging or how to deal with differing contextual factors. This is in fact a general risk in the use of evidence-based practices.

Sharon Berlin's discussion of the cognitive-integrative perspective, to which she has dedicated most of her professional life, is thoughtfully and largely persuasively presented in chapter 3. The chapter is a valuable and intriguing history of Berlin's intellectual journey, and though the first-person presentation is sometimes distracting, it reflects the extent to which the development of this approach to practice has been a one-person endeavor. Berlin has been a leader in this field, bringing serious attention to ongoing stresses and structural realities within which many social work clients live out their lives, not simply as indirect services but as integral dimensions of her overall model. She began with Aaron Beck's model of cognitive therapy for depression, but she recognized early on that while, for example, many social work clients are depressed, their negative cognitions are often neither the only nor the central precipitants of that depression. Further, difficult life circumstances are often central in sustaining depressive emotion and negative cognitions. Berlin also presents a strong summary of the Interacting Cognitive Subsystem (ICS) model of memory and mind. As a cognitive model, ICS relies on the usual but largely unverifiable emphases on unobservable hypothesized structures and entities (e.g., memory traces, implicational meaning, codes, and cognitive subsystems). Berlin makes serious attempts to integrate and refine the model based on emerging neuropsychological research, an important direction and one that social work must embrace. Berlin indicates that "clinicians do not necessarily need to master" the technicalities of the theory to use it (49). Social work theoreticians have often suggested this, but practitioners who do not understand the underlying theory can only function as technicians rather than full professionals. Mastering theory, however, often requires deeper education than we provide—a serious issue in the profession. Berlin has also worked to integrate techniques from other models into her work, where they either fit within or help refine her model, such as mindfulness work. But it may be worth Berlin's time to also look closely at Steven Hayes's acceptance and commitment therapy (Steven C. Hayes, Kirk D. Strosahl, and Kelly G. Wilson, *Acceptance and Commitment Therapy: An Experiential Approach to Behavior Change* [New York: Guilford, 1999]). Although most of Berlin's discussion relates to cognitive theory and intervention, more than any of the other chapters in this book, her chapter recognizes and repeats the need for structural intervention as well.

William Borden and James Clark offer the reader a surprisingly up-to-date and valuable chapter on contemporary psychodynamic theory, research, and practice, integrating an emphasis on interdisciplinary collaboration and understanding. They clarify the history and diversity of the field, note the paucity of psychodynamic content in current social work literature, and argue that a new look is justified. The chapter particularly emphasizes object-relations, self-psychological, and interpersonal perspectives (the first two of which, like most cognitive approaches, rely heavily on reified structures and entities that, at their best, are conceptually useful metaphors). The chapter really comes into its own when it turns to the contemporary relational paradigm, which offers not only a distinct approach but also insights that can be useful for other approaches to practice. The authors attempt to demonstrate that empirical work in neuroscience, cognitive psychology, and other related fields "corroborate fundamental propositions underlying relational conceptions of personality" (75). However, an exploration of the materials cited suggests that while one can essentially map psychodynamic theory onto research in those fields, that research does not offer evidence for psychodynamic theory. On the other hand, the authors convincingly argue that psychodynamic theorists no longer reflexively resist empirical testing, and they (accurately) report growing evidence for the effectiveness of contemporary psychodynamic practice.

Julia Littell's well-crafted chapter on research synthesis brings to the surface questions that are not often explored. Her discussion of the biases that are fre-

quently present in unsystematic research reviews is clear and persuasive, and her guidelines for systematic reviews are immediately useful. Littell particularly favors meta-analysis, an important development in research synthesis, though the methodology does have limitations that are not spelled out in detail in this chapter. Meta-analyses of drug studies have the advantage of a relatively common intervention (the drug), although even in those cases the details of administration and context (including funders) clearly matter. By contrast, in the multiple studies of multisystemic therapy (MST) on which Littell has focused in a number of publications, the similarity of interventions across studies has been quite uneven. The reality is that one clinician might use exactly the same words in talking to a client that the clinician in the next office might, but the two might get very different results based on subtleties of tone, mood, and personal characteristics. The complexity and multidimensionality of many psychosocial interventions even when generally performed with fidelity to a model make any assumption of similarity much more questionable than in drug studies. Meta-analysis is generally only performed on studies meeting rigorous criteria—typically only on randomized clinical trials. In Littell's example, eight studies of MST met such criteria. I am aware of 34 studies of MST, and many of those that are not randomized trials have useful information to offer. Therefore, while meta-analyses are certainly valuable, it is important not to limit systematic reviews to them and to remain cautious about their results. Further, all group experiments aggregate data from those who do well, those who do poorly, and those in between, and they provide at most limited (and often no) information about the variables responsible for the variations. Meta-analyses then aggregate those aggregations. There will always be a need as well for time-series designs that allow the systematic and analytic manipulation of variables over time (Mark A. Mattaini, "Single-System Studies," in *The Handbook of Social Work Research Methods*, ed. Bruce A. Thyer, 241–73 [Los Angeles: Sage, 2010]).

If part 1 of this book portrays an increasingly nuanced and refined vision of EBP in social work, part 2 tends to tell a cautionary tale about the challenges of implementation in social service settings, even many regarded as exemplary. Stanley McCracken and colleagues catalog the challenges of implementation and sustainment of innovations, including EBP. Describing an intensive 4-year effort to expand EBP in a large family service agency, the authors indicate that training in EBP was successfully institutionalized within the organization but that doing so required a significant commitment of agency time and resources. They discuss barriers that arose that complicated the project (e.g., funding cuts; reorganizations; staff turnover, including of key champions; and changing priorities), but they noted that such barriers are simply the realities of contemporary agency practice and should therefore be "treated as expectations rather than exceptions" (132). The project was strengthened by the presence of an expert internal coordinator to help with location and interpretation of relevant research.

The following chapter by Jennifer Bellamy and colleagues reports on the Bringing Evidence for Social Work Training (BEST) Project, further detailing the considerable available literature describing the lack of EBP in practice and the barriers to implementation. The BEST project worked with three community agencies in a bottom-up approach to training in EBP, pursuing questions initiated within practice teams while emphasizing team-based learning. The training was successful in a number of ways, but it left staff feeling a need for more support in locating and evaluating resources and "ill-equipped to implement new practice technologies that were identified during the process and unprepared to fully engage in bottom-up EBP on their own" (148). The authors suggest long-term university-agency partnerships as a partial solution. Key limitations here, however, are that scholars appropriately devote much of their effort to generating knowledge, rather than

translation from research to practice, and that university resources are nowhere near sufficiently extensive to support the large number of practice settings and agencies in this manner.

In "Learning from Data: The Beginning of Error Reduction in Illinois Child Welfare," Tina Rzepnicki and colleagues outline a fascinating project aiming to reduce errors in child protective services within the Illinois Department of Child and Family Services (DCFS). They apply root cause analysis to examine the multiple systems and causes that contribute to an adverse outcome (the fatality or serious injury of a child in custody), drawing on a systems perspective on dynamic organizational contexts rather than simply a human-factors approach to error. This approach allows them to identify hidden disincentives for following agency protocols, weaknesses in such protocols themselves, and potential errors at multiple organizational levels. Furthermore, root cause analysis supports backward tracking of case events to examine information in the case history prior to the adverse outcome, suggesting potential points for early identification and intervention in high-risk cases. The analysis suggests sets of common decision-making errors, contextual conditions that dramatically increased risk, and strategies to reduce error. What is not yet known, however, is the extent to which such investigations can reduce error on the ground.

Harold Briggs and Stephen McMillin describe an effort to bring an evidence-based management approach to a struggling community agency. Although the intervention described was conducted prior to the emergence of EBP in the professions, the chapter's argument is important: that implementation of empirically-supported interventions does not guarantee success when embedded in dysfunctional organizational dynamics. The research base on which the efforts reported here relied is not clearly documented in the chapter, but there are valuable hands-on messages here for others in similar situations.

The final chapter by Ronald H. Rooney and Michael De Jong also takes an organizational approach, reporting on an effort to improve services to assist adolescent parents who are wards of the state in a 5-year university-agency collaboration with Illinois DCFS. The goal was to encourage implementation of task-centered practice through training programs that were refined through a program of developmental research. An initial round of training attempting to engage teens around their own goals failed to produce change as determined by a review of case records. Then a series of videos modeling task-centered practice was developed through a collaborative process of appreciative inquiry. The results, however, remained disappointing. Increases in knowledge of the task-centered approach were demonstrated on a paper-and-pencil test, but fidelity to the model in practice was not demonstrated in either case records or case consultations. The authors suggest that the primary barrier in this case was that the central premise of supporting a client's own goals was inconsistent with the values and goals of staff in an at-best semi-voluntary program. They note that lack of goal consensus is a serious obstacle to change within established organizational system.

This volume provides valuable, though not always reassuring, resources for those hoping to encourage and refine EBP in agency settings. It is particularly encouraging for the increasing depth of documentation of the underlying conceptual roots of social work, but worrisome in the context of clear movement away from analytic theory and toward standardized guidelines in day-to-day professional practice, and realistically cautious about the potential for university-initiated collaborations to catalyze sustainable change in institutional social services.

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Organizing for Educational Justice: The Campaign for Public School Reform in the South Bronx. By Michael B. Fabrícant. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2010. Pp. 304. $69.00 (cloth); $22.95 (paper).

Michael Fabricant's book *Organizing for Educational Justice* makes several important contributions to a burgeoning second wave of literature exploring the use of grassroots, youth, and community organizing strategies in education reform.[1] The book presents results from a qualitative analysis of the work of the Community Collaborative to Inform School District 9 (CC9), a coalition of community agencies committed to improving public education in the South Bronx. Fabricant collected data from 2003 to 2005, including observations at almost 100 events and interviews with 40 participants. The result is a rich narrative detailing the complex personal, social, and political dynamics surrounding CC9's efforts to develop and implement a lead-teacher program in New York City public schools. Subsequently implemented, the lead-teacher campaign offers selected teachers the opportunity to spend half of their time in the classroom; they spend the remaining half providing much needed mentoring and professional development to other teachers. This campaign serves as a narrative thread in Fabricant's effort to trace the evolution of CC9's collaborative work in the South Bronx.

There is growing evidence that community organizing can have a significant effect on educational policy, but traditional organizing strategies must be adapted for use in education policy circles. Schools offer unique organizing challenges that are not typically encountered in housing, employment, or community-safety campaigns. For example, how can organizers successfully work with public school teachers who might be cast as either campaign allies or targets? Organizations working on education issues generally acquire these strategic adaptations through a process of trial and error, so Fabricant's description of CC9's strategic growth and development is a valuable contribution to the literature.

Prior to the formation of CC9, some individual community groups conducted campaigns consistent with traditional organizing models (e.g., in the style of Saul Alinsky). Several of the participant groups leveraged a homogeneous power base to win small-scale changes. They relied on conflict-based strategies and targeted specific, small-scale, winnable objectives. Yet these same groups came to realize that their campaigns resulted more often than not in Pyrrhic victories. For example, one group successfully removed a building principal but found the replacement to be ineffective as well. Trust between the parents and the school diminished as a result of the action, and the campaign investment yielded little school improvement.

Community members and organizers came to realize that campaigns focused on narrow objectives, like the removal of a single building administrator, would not create the type of systemic and sustainable change necessary for the transformation of public education in New York. Fabricant writes: "Simply stated, individual CBOs [community-based organizations] do not have the capacity to wage successful campaigns for educational change systemwide" (38). Thus, Fabricant describes the work of CC9 as the second stage of education organizing in the Bronx.

1. See, e.g., Kavitha Mediratta, Seema Shah, and Sara McAlister, *Community Organizing for Stronger Schools: Strategies and Successes* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard Education Press, 2009); Soo Hong, *A Cord of Three Strands: A New Approach to Parent Engagement in Schools* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard Education Press, 2011); and Mark R. Warren, Karen L. Mapp, and the Community Organizing and School Reform Project, *A Match on Dry Grass: Community Organizing as a Catalyst for School Reform* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011).

In this second stage, CC9 unites the efforts of different community-based organizations. It also collaborates with district administrators and the local teachers' union. Here the depth and breadth of Fabricant's case study is particularly notable. The perspectives of community organizers and parents affiliated with CC9 are appropriately privileged in the text, but the most unique contributions to the narrative belong to the leaders in the United Federation of Teachers (UFT) and administrators within the New York Department of Education. Case studies in the education organizing literature are frequently one-sided in their description of campaigns, and the inclusion of these participants creates a more robust depiction. They provide new insights into the motivations of school decision makers and humanize what might otherwise become faceless targets in an organizing campaign. Readers gain a deep understanding of the sources of conflict between educators and the communities they serve. As Sarah Lawrence-Lightfoot notes in her book, *The Essential Conversation: What Parents and Teachers Can Learn from Each Other* (New York: Random House, 2003), "Every time parents and teachers encounter one another in the classroom, their conversations are shaped by their own autobiographical stories and by the broader cultural and historical narratives that inform their identities, their values, and their sense of place in the world" (3).

Fabricant successfully captures these complex relational dynamics that both enhance and hinder collaborations among family, school, and community. Parents who live in the South Bronx and are affiliated with CC9 are skeptical of the commitment of teachers who are not from the neighborhood. They also are frustrated by a district administration that seems unable to improve public education. For their part, teachers perceive that parental involvement is lacking in the community, and the perception is based in part on the teachers' limited interaction with families outside of school. Moreover, many veteran educators still bear the emotional scars of a mid-1960 community initiative in the Ocean Hill–Brownsville district. Educators interpreted that initiative as an assault on teacher professionalism. These tensions are palpable during the early stages of the lead-teacher campaign, but a major trust-building breakthrough is eventually achieved when CC9 leaders express their willingness to cancel a coveted and elusive meeting with then-Chancellor Joel Klein because the UFT is not invited to a lead-teacher meeting. The meeting with Klein occurs without UFT, but the good faith gesture becomes a turning point for community-union relations, shifting the emphasis from collaboration to solidarity. Challenges inherent to the parent-teacher dynamic remain, but a mutual respect is forged that enables CC9 and UFT to move forward as authentic partners.

This level of thick description is present throughout Fabricant's text. It successfully captures both the external and internal challenges encountered by CC9. Coalition members sometimes fail to deliver on their commitments. Overworked community organizers burn out and quit. The Iron Rule of Organizing is occasionally violated as leaders are called to make swift decisions. Fabricant delves into each of these "practice dilemmas" (230) and comes to the interesting conclusion that "effective change organizations recognize that the push-pull between reform aspiration and social reality is the grist for developing a robust organizing practice" (231). In essence, he argues, "such uncertainty has the significant potential value of forcing a campaign leadership to rethink direction, tactic, and strategy" (231). It is an honest portrayal that captures the nonlinear and occasionally ambiguous nature of both participatory democracy in action and organizing work in general. In contrast with literature that oversimplifies the organizing process, this nuanced portrayal of the complex dynamics among families, schools, and communities makes the victories of CC9 even more gratifying and instructive.

The strength of Fabricant's book is its careful consideration of the microlevel politics of education reform. Although there is much to learn from the work of

CC9, attempts to generalize certain findings are less compelling than others and require further study. For example, Fabricant contextualizes the work of CC9 as a form of resistance to the neoliberal policies that have come to dominate the public education agenda in the United States. This may be true for participants in CC9, but it should not be generalized as representative of education organizing writ large. Although education organizing has played a critical role in empowering historically marginalized populations to engage in educational policy discourse, the aims and objectives of these organizations are not always consistent with progressive education reforms. The recent parent-trigger legislation in California, the implementation of direct-instruction literacy practices in Miami, and support for the development of neighborhood charter schools are just a few examples of results from education organizing campaigns in the past decade. Perhaps more generalizable are findings related to the desire and need for community-based organizations that are independent of school systems. Fabricant might also generalize findings concerning the value of incremental victories as a part of the journey to broader systemic change in public education and the potential power of broad-based coalitions in education policy discourse.

Organizing for Educational Justice could be used as the central text for a graduate-level seminar and a community-based organization's strategy meeting. This is intended as high praise, since few existing books are able to effectively speak to both audiences. Although Fabricant's book may reinforce many previous findings on parental empowerment, community leadership development, and the promise of education organizing as a reform strategy, the book makes its own unique contributions by tracing organizational growth and by revealing the relational and political dynamics that shape campaign work on education issues. Overall, it is a compelling case study that will be an asset for students, scholars, community organizers, education leaders, and anyone interested in how communities can contribute to transformative educational change.

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Controlling Crime: Strategies and Tradeoffs. Edited by Philip J. Cook, Jens Ludwig, and Justin McCrary. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011. Pp. 720. $110.00 (cloth).

It has often been said that you can never be too rich or too thin. But one in three respondents in a 1994 survey who indicated crime to be the nation's biggest problem might add that you can never be too safe. For several decades, federal, state, and local governments have pursued public safety through aggressive punishment and increased correctional supervision. By 2008, one in 100 Americans was incarcerated, and that rate is exponentially higher for certain groups. Unfortunately, as in the pursuit of wealth and weight loss, singularity of purpose has side effects; public safety costs money, and heavy spending on public safety necessitates important trade-offs. To keep pace with rising criminal justice costs, states reduced spending on other social services, such as education and public health, although these services arguably help reduce crime by promoting positive health, educational, and economic outcomes.

Economist Gary Becker wrote that the social costs of crime are the sum of the direct costs of crime and the costs to control crime ("Crime and Punishment: An Economic Approach," *Journal of Political Economy* 76, no. 2 [1968]: 169–217). In their recently published volume, *Controlling Crime: Strategies and Tradeoffs*, Philip J.

Cook, Jens Ludwig, and Justin McCrary observe that with falling crime rates and increasing incarceration and correctional supervision, the United States faces a new "crime 'problem'" (2): the costs of crime control, to the state and to people impacted by the criminal justice system, appear to far exceed the benefits of reduced crime. In the wake of the Great Recession and declining federal subsidies for prison construction, states face the challenging question of how they can maintain or improve public safety without relying on the present level of incarceration.

This volume, which consists of 12 papers and associated commentaries from a 2010 National Bureau of Economic Research (NBER) conference, provides preliminary answers to this important problem. NBER conference volumes sometimes lack a uniform argument, presenting insufficient discussion of the policy implications beyond brief treatment within individual chapters. In this volume, however, the editors conceive their task as developing an integrated crime control portfolio to guide policy makers in selecting cost-effective alternatives to incarceration. They succeed in this endeavor, ensuring that, as strong as the individual chapters are, when taken as a whole, this volume is worth much more than the sum of its parts.

The book is a useful primer for practitioners and policy makers concerned not only with the size, cost, and sustainability of the criminal justice system but also with its ever-encroaching influence. Not being an economist myself, I particularly appreciate the thoughtful, transparent application of the economic perspective to crime control policies. The editors readily acknowledge that efficiency is neither the only nor the best criterion in determining the appropriate punishment. The policy challenge lies in whether cost-benefit analysis provides the path to an affordable, let alone just, criminal justice system. If policy makers are concerned only with reducing the cost of crime control relative to the amount the government currently spends, and they are confident in our assessment of which acts rise to the level of criminalization, then this book provides an excellent tool kit to achieve more cost-effective public safety. States already indicate a willingness to pay a given amount for crime control, and economists can use existing prison costs as a ceiling when comparing policy alternatives.

As important as cost-effective public safety is, of course, it is not the only aim of a criminal justice system. And though the editors are careful to state that their goal is limited to identifying the most cost-effective crime control alternatives, there are places in the text where they allude to a larger goal. For instance, they suggest that "one way to reduce the demand for retribution is to reduce the amount of crime" (2). On the face of it, this is entirely reasonable: if everyone could be prevented from committing robberies, then there would be no need for retribution. But since no cost-effective crime control policy can eradicate all criminal activity, at least some people will be subject to punishment.

Thus I am skeptical that economic calculations alone will lead to the right decisions in cases where the alternatives entail changes either in the legal status of an act or in the punitive response. Focusing research entirely on calculating the economic costs of various alternatives may detach punishments and sanctions from considerations of, for instance, retribution and just desserts. So if the criminal justice system is on the cusp of wholesale changes, especially in the legal status of certain offenses or the mode of punishment for various offenses, policy makers should be mindful of relevant considerations beyond cost-effective crime control.

It is also worth noting the importance of comparison in thinking about cost effectiveness. David Alan Sklansky's insightful essay cautions against incarceration as a comparison case: "Incarceration is our default form of punishment, and it is scandalously expensive. The problem is that the comparison is almost too easy. Compared to imprisonment, almost everything looks good" (123). Sklansky shows how this can be a dangerous attitude by describing two general mechanisms by

which the pursuit of affordable alternatives to incarceration can inadvertently expand the scope of the criminal justice system.

First, less costly alternatives can widen the net, drawing in people who would not otherwise have entered the criminal justice system. Harold Pollack, Peter Reuter, and Eric Sevigny provide a compelling explanation of why drug courts as presently designed will have little real effect on prison populations. They observe that first-time defendants charged with drug possession who are eligible for diversion to drug court would not likely have gone to prison otherwise. Most drug-involved defendants are holdovers from past drug epidemics, so their extensive criminal histories preclude them from diversion, even though they are less likely to commit violent crimes than younger drug-involved defendants. Drug courts are designed to reduce reliance on incarceration for drug-involved offenders, but they have the perverse effect of expanding the reach of the criminal justice system. Sklansky suggests that the same risk applies when states expand the use of fines as replacements for correctional supervision. If states begin to view monetary sanctions as sources of revenue, rather than as cost-effective alternatives to incarceration for violations that merit punishment, they may paradoxically increase the range of behaviors that can trigger monetary sanctions. These fines may appear quite reasonable when compared to incarceration as the hypothetical alternative punishment, but incarceration is not the appropriate counterfactual for first-time drug offenders or most potential fine recipients.

Second, in practice, less costly alternatives to incarceration might supplement rather than replace incarceration. Piehl and Morrison predict that a substantial minority of offenders will fail to respond to fines, so the system will need to use incarceration as a threat for noncompliance. If people simply cannot or will not pay their fines, the combined use of fines and incarceration might be more costly than the system it replaces. The unintended consequences of such criminal justice reforms could be minimized if policy makers considered not just the cost effectiveness but also the appropriateness of a given approach to punishment.

Space permits me to highlight and discuss only a few of the outstanding contributions to this volume, which covers a wide array of topics relevant to readers interested in social welfare policy. Other chapters express healthy reservations about the merit of further investments in or expansion of the approaches they review, noting that other interventions, such as education and early childhood programs, may have broader and more cost-beneficial effects on criminal activity. In their chapter, Sara B. Heller, Brian A. Jacob, and Jens Ludwig conclude that even though income transfer and mobility programs appear to reduce criminal activity, the benefits might not persist if implemented on a larger scale. More importantly, they note that income transfer and mobility programs may have fewer crime-reducing benefits than investments that increase human capital development. Other chapters evaluate alcohol regulation, the role of private actors in crime, social-cognitive skill interventions, and education programming.

Scholars in a variety of disciplines should read this volume. The authors' conceptual framing of the issues and their empirical analyses are consistently impressive, and they present nuanced recommendations derived from careful evaluation of the best empirical data available. This collection contributes much to discussions about how to reform the criminal justice system and how to improve the lives of those who are impacted by the criminal justice system. By focusing on cost effectiveness, it does not tell the whole story about how we should respond to crime, nor does it aim to. But the part of the story it tells, it tells quite well. My only proviso is that policy makers invite theorists as well as economists to the table.

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Changing Inequality. By Rebecca M. Blank. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011. Pp. 240. $60.00 (cloth); $24.95 (paper).

The economist Rebecca M. Blank became the acting secretary of commerce in June of 2012, following the resignation of Secretary John Bryson. Before that, Blank served as deputy secretary of commerce and under secretary for economic affairs, as well as head of the Economics and Statistics Administration. Despite serving in the Obama administration since 2009, Blank somehow managed to find time to write a book, *Changing Inequality*, which is an extension and elaboration of her 2009 Aaron Wildavsky Forum for Public Policy lecture at the University of California, Berkeley. The book is essentially a primer on the changing face of wages, earnings, and income inequality between 1979 and 2007, the eve of the Great Recession.

Changing Inequality is less an argument about the extent and causes of rising economic inequality than it is a thorough documentation and decomposition of the key facts. As Blank notes at the outset, "The primary goal of the book is to describe shifts in the distribution of income among working-age adults over the last 3 decades and to consider how and why inequality might change in the future" (6–7). Although nominally the subject of the book is changes over nearly 3 decades, Blank chooses to focus on just 2 years, 1979 and 2007, which were effectively ends to periods of economic expansion, coming immediately before deep and severe economic contractions (the double-dip recessions of the early Reagan years and the so-called Great Recession of 2007–9). This choice of course comes at the expense of some nuance when it comes to understanding the dynamics of rising inequality. For instance, the reader loses a general understanding of what happened to the bottom of the income distribution in the 1980s versus the roaring economy of the mid- to late-1990s, not to mention the substantial changes following the 1996 welfare reform. But what Blank loses in breadth she gains in depth, as she is able to focus in on these 2 years and parse out exactly how and in what ways the overall pattern of income distribution has changed over this lengthy time period.

The primary contribution of Blank's work here is a thorough decomposition of the changes in wages, earnings, and family income across the time period, with an explicit focus on patterns by gender and family structure. Because much of the literature focuses on growing wage inequality, especially among working-age men, Blank's more comprehensive treatment is quite welcome, and it tells some stories that might be somewhat surprising to those who are interested in rising inequality. Blank first confirms what numerous researchers have found, namely, that wage inequality has grown substantially over the past 3 decades among both men and women and that it has been much more substantial at the top of the wage distribution than at the bottom. But Blank extends this by showing how the rise in inequality in earnings is much less pronounced than the rise in wage inequality and that the entire distribution of earnings has shifted upward, thanks largely to the increasing work effort of women (in terms of labor force participation and full-time work) and the greater number of workers working full-time year round. Similarly, because the educational background of the labor force has shifted upward over time, there are fewer and fewer workers with extremely low wages and earnings in the distribution. It would have been nice had Blank also incorporated the rise of mass incarceration, which, as Bruce Western and Becky Pettit, among others, show, removes substantial numbers of low-skilled men from the labor force altogether ("Incarceration and Social Inequality," *Daedalus* 130, no. 3 [2010]: 8–19). Even so, the analysis is still quite revealing in its documentation of the overall rise in economic well-being over the

period. Despite this rise, Blank is correct to note that, since it is due primarily to increased work effort and not to rising wages for many workers, the overall welfare implications of the rise in well-being remain uncertain. Indeed, Blank notes that workers' perceived happiness and economic security did not rise despite the overall increases in economic well-being, perhaps because of rising income volatility or declining job stability (though Blank's analyses do not directly test these ideas).

Individuals who garner wages and earnings in the labor market also aggregate into families, of course, so understanding changes in total family income is a key part of the puzzle. Here the story is similar, and Blank shows that family income inequality has grown substantially over time, albeit around an overall growth in median family income. As with earnings, however, a good deal of this growth in overall family income can be attributed to the rising work effort of women, whose wages and earnings now contribute a growing share of families' incomes. But the fine print to the rising incomes story is a growing number of families with very low incomes, who are clearly a cause for concern among policy makers and social service providers.

In addition to documenting key trends, the book also examines why the changes in wages, earnings, and family income occurred. Upon hearing this laudable goal, I expected that Blank would provide a thorough review of the decades of literature on the forces driving increased inequality, from technological change and globalization to the decline in union formation and bottlenecks in the educational system to many others. Instead, the book presents a set of simulations for how inequality would look in 2007 had only one component of inequality changed while the rest of the world had stayed at 1979 levels. So, for example, if only the skill distribution had changed between 1979 and 2007 but wage inequality, female work effort, and everything else had stayed at 1979 levels, she asks how much different would overall inequality be in 2007. Blank finds that changing family demographics, such as the rise of single-headed families and the decline in married families, can account for only a modest 14 percent of the rise in income inequality. Much more can be explained by the changes in constituent parts of family income, particularly accelerating wage inequality and the growing work effort and earnings of women. While such simulations and decompositions are enormously informative for assessing the relative contributions of various components of income changes, the book only briefly considers actual narratives for what drove the enormous changes that Blank chronicles. The addition of another chapter documenting the growing literature on this subject, and where the evidence stands in support of or against various theories, would have made *Changing Inequality* an even greater resource as a basic primer on what has happened to inequality in the United States over the past few decades.

For the remainder of the book, Blank ponders two additional important questions for readers interested in the current recession and the future of American inequality. First, what is the role of economic shocks in altering dynamics of inequality? These shocks are defined to include big events like wars, epidemics, financial crises, and recessions, as well as more slow-moving shocks like the introduction and diffusion of new technologies. Blank avoids sweeping generalities about the effects of these shocks on increases or reductions in inequality, instead pointing to the underappreciated point that the effects of such shocks are quite variable and are often contingent on the surrounding political economy and the political and policy choices we make in response to them. To provide but one simple but illustrative example, Blank notes that the opening up of new land and new frontiers can induce inequality, if it is commanded by an elite wealthy few, but can reduce inequality, if laws extend free access to land to the wider community. Another useful insight involves the distinction between short-term and long-term effects of these

shocks, which may often be quite different. The introduction of a new technology, for instance, may induce inequality in the short term if only highly skilled workers benefit from its introduction or if it displaces less skilled workers. But as that technology becomes more widespread or creates more overall economic growth, less skilled workers may ultimately benefit from its introduction.

Second, and finally, Blank looks at whether inequality might be reduced by changes in various economic and social processes. For example, how much would inequality decline if 20 percent of single parents were to marry? Or if the education of the labor force continually upgraded? The surprising answer, according to Blank's simulations, is not very much at all. This is likely the result of Blank's choice not to simulate two of the big factors she earlier found to explain a great deal of the rise in income inequality: large increases in the incomes of those at the top of the distribution and the increasing work effort and earnings of women. Perhaps more surprising is how little another of Blank's simulations does to reduce inequality, eliminating poverty. In this simulation, Blank simply raises everyone's income to the poverty line if they fell under that line and then estimates various inequality metrics on this simulated data. The global measure of inequality, the Gini coefficient, only drops by 3.7 percent. It seems that while antipoverty policies and poverty reduction are important goals in and of themselves, eradicating poverty would do little to reverse the overall trend toward greater inequality.

Overall, *Changing Inequality* provides a sober, clear-eyed primer to the basic facts about the rise in inequality in the United States over the past 3 decades. It should be enormously useful to readers seeking an introduction to the field of inequality. Blank's authoritative accounting and decomposition of inequality trends is a gift to the field, one that is all the more impressive given what is presumably a rather demanding day job.

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Coming of Age in America: The Transition to Adulthood in the Twenty-First Century. Edited by Mary C. Waters, Patrick J. Carr, Maria J. Kefalas, and Jennifer Holdaway. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011. Pp. 256. $60.00 (cloth); $26.95 (paper).

"Kids these days" has been the refrain of every generation's elders attempting to make sense of the seemingly senseless behavior of youth. In recent years, however, the question has crept further into the life span to become, "What is it about 20-somethings?" (Robin Henig, "What Is It about 20-Somethings?" *New York Times Magazine*, August 18, 2010). Spawned from the MacArthur Network on Successful Transitions to Adulthood, *Coming of Age in America* aims to answer this question by reporting on a large-scale qualitative study of young adults from four sites across the United States: rural Iowa, Saint Paul, New York City, and San Diego. The collection draws on 400 interviews conducted with a broad swath of youth, including voices that are often overlooked in studies on the transition to adulthood: members of racial and ethnic minorities, poor and working-class youth, and those who have little to no postsecondary education.

Such a large-scale, multisite qualitative study is extremely rare, even though such an approach is clearly valuable. Each chapter of this book appropriately balances analysis of the interviewees' experiences with the voices of the youth themselves, resulting in a powerful and compelling collection. Each chapter

stands alone, but the high degree of cohesiveness among the chapters makes for an integrated, comprehensive account of the changing landscape of adulthood. Despite the many differences among the samples included in the study, the themes across the chapters are remarkably consistent, bringing a high degree of coherence not often seen in edited books. One of the fundamental themes across the chapters is the tension between traditional and modern markers of adulthood. Richard Settersten describes "the 'Big Five' of traditional markers—leaving home, finishing school, getting a job, getting married, and having children" (172). Strikingly, in comparison to generations past, today's youth no longer consider these "Big Five" as necessary or sufficient criteria for adulthood. These markers certainly still matter, as is clear from the data presented, but the transition to adulthood now has a more substantial psychological component that moves beyond mere role attainment. Developing a sense of independence, personal responsibility, and personal growth are now critical elements of becoming an adult.

The shift in the criteria for attaining adulthood is associated with a marked shift in the nature of the transition itself. Other important life transitions (e.g., the transition to high school or college, or the transition to parenthood) are relatively discrete, comprised of the anticipation period, the transitional event, and the adjustment period. The transition to adulthood, on the other hand, is qualitatively distinct in its prolonged nature and nebulous entry and exit points. It not only takes longer to attain adult status, the whole meaning of adulthood has also changed, so that adulthood can be achieved through various means. Importantly, youth are generally untroubled by this new meaning of adulthood but rather embrace it and actively work toward it. Indeed, the quotes featured in *Coming of Age in America* are brimming with positivity and optimism about a bright future. These observations are what led Jeffrey Jensen Arnett to describe emerging adulthood as a new period in the life course rather than simply a change in the nature of the transition ("Emerging Adulthood: A Theory of Development from the Late Teens through the Twenties," *American Psychologist* 55, no. 5 [2000]: 469–80). In some ways, referring to the experience as a transition minimizes its substantial role in the life span. In reality, this period of the life span is no more of a transition than adolescence is a transition from childhood to adulthood. Each phase of the life span always serves a transitionary purpose of the next but each must also be conceptualized and understood in its own right.

In the introductory chapter, Mary C. Waters, Patrick J. Carr, and Maria J. Kefalas argue for the importance of "cultural scripts" (15) around adulthood, describing how now multiple scripts are available to young people to make sense of their individual pathways to adulthood. Indeed, the pathway metaphor is prominent throughout the book. In rural Iowa, youth are characterized as leavers, returners, and stayers, with each group representing a different balance and interaction between personal choice and opportunities (Carr and Kefalas). In San Diego, there are the motivated achievers, optimistic strivers, wishful thinkers, and uncertain achievers, representing the complex relations that youth have with the educational system (Linda Borgen and Rubén G. Rumbaut). What is clear from *Coming of Age in America* is that there are many ways to come of age and that no one way is correct.

These strengths notwithstanding, there are some major shortcomings to this collection. For one, more than 90 percent of interviews were conducted with youth age 23 or older. But, as noted by Carr and Kefalas, the transition to adulthood begins in high school as an anticipatory process. Thus the experiences represented in the book do not capture the lives of those youth who are just beginning to put adolescence behind them and looking toward adulthood. For this reason, scholars from psychological disciplines may find the book to be somewhat incomplete in its representation of the transition.

The concluding chapter by Kefalas and Carr raises another critical tension. Much of the first half of the chapter focuses on the effect of the Great Recession, which began in 2008, on the transition to adulthood. However, the primacy given to this contemporary context is misplaced, as the data presented in the book are from 2002 to 2003. While it is certainly important for the book to acknowledge and address the contemporary economic context, the tension created between this focus and the context of the data is not sufficiently resolved. Furthermore, the focus on data from before the Great Recession raises an important concern of whether the themes detailed in the book are applicable to the transition experience of today's youth or those of the future.

Finally, this book highlights the need to integrate different disciplinary approaches to the transition to adulthood, rather than be antagonistic and make attempts to carve out a sense of disciplinary uniqueness. As a psychologist reading this book, I see the data to be quite consistent with Arnett's description of emerging adulthood. However, the essays make little reference to the large body of emerging adulthood research, though in several instances authors set their findings or perspectives in contrast to emerging adulthood research. Oftentimes this is done implicitly, but there are also explicit contrasts. In his chapter on markers of adulthood, Settersten remarks: "Our interviews often stand in contradiction to popular psychological theories that depict this period of life as an extended 'moratorium' from age-normative tasks, characterized by pervasive exploration and the avoidance of commitment" (190). This quote gives the erroneous impression that emerging adulthood is a generally negative characterization of young adulthood, which is ironic given that it is most typically criticized for being overly positive and optimistic both objectively concerning the state of young people and how youth subjectively view their own situations (see, e.g., James Côté, "Emerging Adulthood as an Institutionalized Moratorium," in *Emerging Adults in America: Coming of Age in the 21st Century*, ed. Jeffrey Jensen Arnett and Jennifer Lynn Tanner [Washington, DC: American Psychological Association, 2006]). There are certainly differences in viewpoints among various scholars of the transition, but I see these as quibbles primarily concerning the trees in the same forest.

In sum, *Coming of Age in America* is an important collection that is critical reading for scholars of the transition to adulthood. The breadth of coverage and depth of analysis render the book valuable for senior researchers, while the compelling writing, clear exposition, and inclusion of the voices of young people make it suitable for graduate and advanced undergraduate courses in sociology and psychology. The limitations of the book serve as good fodder for debate and discussion about the transition to adulthood. One thing that everyone can likely agree on is that there is something about 20-somethings these days. Indeed, both the meanings of adulthood and the motivations for attaining it are no longer the same.

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Not Quite Adults: Why 20-Somethings Are Choosing a Slower Path to Adulthood, and Why It's Good for Everyone. By Richard Settersten and Barbara Ray. New York: Bantam, 2010. Pp. 272. $15.00 (paper).

A recurring challenge to those interested in how society works is identifying the character of each new generation of young people. The MacArthur Research Network on Transition to Adulthood and Public Policy provides insight into young people in contemporary society with an overview of its broad and impressive body

of work, packaged to appeal to a wide, nonscholarly audience. This group of leading scholars, supported by the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, is responsible for many important findings and has authored a small library of articles and books that are required reading for anyone in the field. Richard Settersten and Barbara Ray's *Not Quite Adults: Why 20-Somethings Are Choosing a Slower Path to Adulthood, and Why It's Good for Everyone* joins this library and seeks to expand the audience beyond researchers, policy makers, and students.

The authors faced a formidable challenge in seeking to capture the breadth and complexity of Network activity, but they draw on their considerable experience to provide a strong introduction to 8 years of research. Network member Richard Settersten, an Oregon State University sociologist, and Barbara Ray, the Network communications director, are mostly successful in navigating the body of work. The findings of the Network scholars presented in *Not Quite Adults* draw primarily from analyses of various national surveys (e.g., Current Population Surveys, National Longitudinal Survey of Youth) and in-depth interviews conducted with almost 500 individuals ages 18–34 in five sites across the country. Throughout the book, anecdotes and quotes from these interviews enrich the research findings. Analysis of the interview data also informs the authors' arguments, though at times it is difficult to discern when conclusions are grounded in these interviews or when they reflect less formal analysis of media and societal trends.

One key set of findings concerns postsecondary education, whose growing costs have far outpaced the inflation rate. The authors say that a traditional college degree may not be appropriate for all young people but that college remains a prudent financial investment. Indeed, Network research tells us that the lifetime average return on a college degree is double what it was in 1975. In contrast, for those who struggle to earn a baccalaureate degree, career prospects are dim. While many students seek out less expensive degrees at community colleges, the authors contend that these institutions do not currently seem to serve the needs of the generation; about half of those enrolling in community colleges drop out and do not return to school. For those with limited educational achievement, income is likely to remain low, especially at the tail of the curve: wages of high school dropouts have been stagnant for 25 years.

Settersten and Ray describe how educational achievement is just one characteristic that divides 20-somethings into two groups, called "swimmers" and "treaders," with very different life trajectories. The theme runs throughout the book and provides a compelling and disconcerting picture. The authors' argument is not new (see, e.g., Sara McLanahan's article, "Diverging Destinies: How Children Are Faring under the Second Demographic Transition" *Demography* 41, no. 4 [2004]: 607–27), but the Network's findings illuminate the nature and consequences of these "diverging destinies" (xii). Treaders make up more than two-thirds of the generation and face considerable financial difficulties. Compared to swimmers, they possess fewer financial assets, earn lower wages, and are more reliant on kin for enduring financial support. While both groups have higher levels of debt compared to earlier generations, the debt of swimmers tends to arise from mortgages or well-deployed educational loans, while treaders face higher credit card debt. Rising incomes for swimmers have also dulled the sting of loan payments, as stagnant wages make debt more difficult for treaders. The authors contend that the rift between these groups is growing wider and that few youths inhabit a middle ground. In pursuing college achievement, for example, they write that "Being an average kid is not the ticket it used to be. Plain vanilla doesn't count" (65).

Family relationships also distinguish swimmers from treaders. The authors identify three kinds of parents of 20-somethings, those who are "extremely in-

volved parents of most well-positioned young people," those who take a "hands-off approach," and those parents who are "neglectful, at best, and may even be abusive" (119). Settersten and Ray say that extremely involved parents are more common than in generations past, and this style of parenting seems to be critical in guiding young people's success. Hands-off parenting, on the other hand, is more characteristic of earlier generations and also of young people today destined to be treaders. Beyond parenting, marriage "itself is a dividing line marking the prospects of the swimmers and the treaders" (97). While swimmers live with their partners as a test run for marriage, treaders tend to engage in serial cohabitation and to have children earlier in life, more often outside of marriage.

While the chapters on education, finances, and family are very strong, the book is weaker when the authors turn to civic and political participation. They address these topics in distinct chapters, which I find to be odd, given that the authors cite Robert Putnam, who recognized the important relationship between civic and political life. These chapters also seem to veer away from the solid footing provided by Network research as the authors draw in evidence from online polls, comment boards, and their own analysis of the political trends and the effects of the internet on this generation. Here the authors make the dubious and unsupported assertion that virtual communities are "exactly like" the ones that they say that Robert Putnam "claims have all but died" (107). (The authors cite Putnam's *Bowling Alone: Collapse and Revival of American Community* [New York: Simon & Schuster, 2000].) Indeed, the sun may already be setting on the virtual world of *Second Life* discussed by the authors, and the promising *Teen Second Life* discussed in the book shut down in 2010. While the authors give considerable attention to the 2008 presidential election as a sign of increased political involvement among youths, they state later that the turnout was "neither high nor necessarily permanent" (171). Moreover, this discussion seems to speak to the experiences of only swimmers. Treaders, whose social networks are less extensive, are advised to "join community groups, seek out like minds online, get involved by volunteering, and make an effort to network. None of this takes money–just time" (117). Later in the volume, however, the authors acknowledge that people in poorer communities, treaders, have "little time to volunteer" (158).

Many readers will discover a breezy but substantive introduction to important findings that drive current policy discourse. At its best, the book takes a tone of an informed layperson reviewing Network research. Like a good conversation, illustrated by stories of young people who took part in the Network interviews, the book is informative, colorful, and an enjoyable read. But those familiar with the Network's research will find little that is new in *Not Quite Adults*, as most of the book's findings can be found in earlier volumes (see, e.g., Sheldon Danziger and Cecilia Rouse, eds., *The Price of Independence: The Economics of Early Adulthood* [New York: Sage, 2007]).

The tone of the book can be frustratingly glib, with occasional clichés, hyperboles, and mixed metaphors that distract rather than enlighten. The informality of the tone extends to the organization within chapters, and the titles and subheadings provide little guidance to the reader. For example, chapter 5, "The Unlonely Crowd: Friends and Social Networks," seems to be simply a pun rather than a meaningful reference to David Riesman's work (David Riesman, Nathan Glazer, and Reuel Denney, *The Lonely Crowd: A Study of the Changing American Character* [New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1950]). One subsection title, "It's a Hard-Knocks Life" (cautioning against hands-off parenting) could easily be swapped for "Fending for Themselves" (which briefly addresses the circumstances of foster youths). The subsection "There Are No Free-Range Children Here" invokes Alex Kotlowitz's excellent book on two boys growing up in public

housing (Alex Kotlowitz, *There Are No Children Here: The Story of Two Boys Growing Up in the Other America* [New York: Anchor Books, 1991]), but it discusses without irony the benefits of heavy parental involvement in successfully guiding their children through college and graduate school. And what is the reader to make of the book's final subsection, "Is It All Bad?" The title seems incongruent with the thrust of the book's effort to maintain a hopeful tone and the ostensible argument that a prolonged period to adulthood is, as the book's title suggests, "good for everyone."

Throughout the book, the authors provide guidance to parents, youths, and policy makers grounded in Network research. For policy makers, Settersten and Ray emphasize the need to provide alternative career paths for treaders who are not college bound. Such paths could emerge by improving community colleges, developing career academies, strengthening unions, developing special residential communities for young people, and expanding gap year opportunities such as AmeriCorps. Some suggestions, however, seem out of place. The notion of providing marriage-like support for cohabitation, based on European models, is undermined by research findings that favor (later) marriage. At several points the authors emphasize the importance of delaying marriage until a young person is well grounded in life and career. At the end, however, they recommend increased state support for early cohabitation and commitment. This recommendation seems incongruous with the research they present earlier. Other policy recommendations that might arise from the book's discussion are not discussed. For example, the authors report that fewer than half the new jobs available to this generation require a college degree, but they do not suggest any way to improve income disparities evident between swimmers and treaders. The authors do not suggest improving support for single parents or improving public education, and issues of race and immigration receive almost no attention in the book. Likewise, the roles that neighborhoods and (nonvirtual) communities play in the lives of young people are also not addressed. However, given the breadth of the research the authors cover, they can be forgiven for failing to cover additional areas and for not developing their recommendations in great depth.

For youths and parents, the authors' advice emphasizes behavior to become a swimmer and avoiding being a treader. The authors promise to "slay misperceptions" (xii) in the introduction, and lay readers may be reassured by many findings: families should not avoid debt if it allows for college attendance; young people should delay marriage and children until after age 25; parents should remain heavily involved in the lives of their children as they negotiate college and the early years of their careers. The authors state that concerns about hyper-involved "helicopter parents" (125) are overblown, and they found very little evidence that supports the media's generational stereotype of youths as self-entitled layabouts; the protracted progression to adulthood and independence reflects mostly the changing nature of education, family formation, and the labor market in contemporary society.

Not Quite Adults expands the MacArthur Network's library, but this book may not be required reading; anyone familiar with the research behind the book will find that this volume provides few meaningful insights not provided in earlier publications. For others, it delivers a good introduction to the important body of Network research, and the powerful theme of the swimmers and treaders ties together findings across chapters. While the book's subtitle leads readers to expect that a "slower path" is increasingly common among this generation and an overall positive development, the most important message of the book involves the plight of the treaders, whom the authors suggest face an increasingly bleak future. This book is a fine introduction to important research illuminating this generation,

and more importantly, and it provides an invitation to explore the rest of the Network library.

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The Philadelphia Barrio: The Arts, Branding, and Neighborhood Transformation. By Frederick F. Wherry. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011. Pp. 208. $96.00 (cloth); $29.00 (paper).

This study of Philadelphia's historically Puerto Rican neighborhood focuses on the efforts of local entrepreneurs, organizations, and residents to harness arts and culture as tools for neighborhood improvement. Drawing on archival materials, newspaper articles, interviews, and participant observation, Frederick F. Wherry argues against a simplistic view that neighborhoods trying to brand themselves results in commodification and exploitation of ethnic authenticity for financial gain. Instead, he writes, cultural analysis can yield a narrative of the ways in which neighborhood actors such as artists, cultural organizations, small business owners, and residents make choices about the kind of cultural community they want to live in and take steps to realize it against the odds.

Philadelphia's barrio has been a low-income neighborhood since Puerto Ricans began arriving in the 1960s and whites fled the area. Moving in step with larger East Coast migration patterns, since 1980 the barrio has become less Puerto Rican. It is now home to a more mixed Latino population, though poverty rates are still high. In a welcome move, Wherry's study aims to eschew the usual object of analysis for sociological studies of poor neighborhoods, the difficulties and pathologies of low-income life. In one particularly direct statement, Wherry says, "I leave to other ethnographers the task of describing the ethnic poor as competing violently for status and respect" (19). He opts instead to document how local people are working to brand the barrio as the *Centro de Oro*, Philadelphia's Golden District of Latino culture and community, a destination for visitors from across the city and around the world.

This approach yields an interesting structure for the book. Following an introductory chapter that lays out some of the book's goals as well as a basic history of Puerto Ricans in Philadelphia, Wherry provides three chapters on different aspects of the branding campaign, all based primarily on interviews and participant observation. The first of these discusses the performance of Latino authenticity through cultural tourism, the second examines the community base of the local arts scene, and the third focuses on local businesses and their relationship to the *Centro de Oro* efforts. The book then transitions, with two chapters on how the barrio has been imagined by the wider public over time and what that might mean for the potential success of the arts and culture approach to neighborhood improvement. These chapters, which are primarily historical in nature, draw mostly on archival records and newspaper accounts, supplemented by some of the interview and participant observation data. The final chapter draws together the author's concluding thoughts, and it is followed by an appendix on research methods.

It is difficult, however, to pin down what the book's analytical object is. The discussion of branding appears throughout, and Wherry makes an important point about how the participatory nature of cultural expression defies its easy reduction to processes of commodification even when culture is explicitly being used for neighborhood economic development. Wherry also puts other analytical ele-

ments into play, but their connection to the question of branding deserves more attention. For example, Wherry writes that the study is concerned with the relationship between neighborhood cultural branding efforts and neighborhood change. While he sketches out the general arc of neighborhood change in the Philadelphia barrio between 1960 and 2000 (which follows the pattern of Northeastern cities more generally) and provides a history of Puerto Rican and Latino cultural activism there during this same period, much more needed to be done to connect the two in order to make claims about the transformative neighborhood potential of arts and culture. Wherry introduces the idea of civil society at several points in the book, but the usage is unclear. Civil society seems to be equated with public opinion of what makes neighborhoods "'good' places" (133), and Wherry sometimes uses the term as a measuring stick for outsiders' views of the barrio. For the idea of civil society to be analytically useful, however, it needs to be linked more clearly to the book's central interests of cultural branding and neighborhood change. The same is true of Wherry's occasional reference to Durkheim's concepts of "sacred" and "profane," which appear almost out of nowhere just before the last chapter of the book (131). The aims of this book are interesting, but they are only partially realized.

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Brief Notices

Justice and the American Metropolis. Edited by Clarissa Rile Hayward and Todd Swanstrom. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2011. Pp. 280. $75.00 (cloth); $25.00 (paper).

This collection questions why inequalities such as housing segregation have persisted since the civil rights reforms of the '60s and why the public discourse surrounding these issues dried up. The editors emphasize that deeply rooted, historical injustice can transform decisions, laws, and polices that are otherwise theoretically neutral to race into measures that unintentionally reinforce segregation and discrimination. They coin this "thick injustice" (9) and argue that the "moral indignation" (3) and urgency of the previous decades has disappeared, even though segregation is condemnable from the point of view of many ideologies, and not just those on the far left. Marxists, post-Marxists, Rawlsians, communitarians, and libertarians all have reason to oppose such inequality. The volume focuses on fragmentation of cities, including the seizure of houses for public use, the placement of municipal and school boundaries, and the structure of suburbs: "place helps naturalize and obscure unjust power relations" (18). Chapters in Part I suggest changes to the role of local institutions, the evaluation policy to make sure it is truly egalitarian, and the relationship between democracy and public space. Part II proposes a way to equalize among municipalities by decreasing equality within them, criticizes the dichotomy between equality and efficiency, and gives case studies. Parts III and IV focus on the question of discourse, providing a critique of legal and institutional frameworks. Political theorists and professors of law and planning from across the country contribute to this volume in an effort to explain why the country is experiencing what Richard Thompson Ford calls "racism without racists" (235).

The City, Revisited: Urban Theory from Chicago, Los Angeles, and New York. Edited by Dennis R. Judd and Dick Simpson. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2010. Pp. 392. $75.00 (cloth); $25.00 (paper).

The City, Revisited is an intellectual history of three major strands of twentieth-century thought, looking at the interaction of schools of urban theory from Chicago, New York, and Los Angeles. Whereas the Chicago school, which began in the 1920s, understood the city as pseudobiological and posited a model of ecological change, the LA school saw "archaeological layering of history, culture, and space" (7) as the main feature of a centerless, localized, and politically fractured agglomeration. New York, on the other hand, though very diverse and divided into boroughs, is tightly bound together, which the New York school attributed to economic restructuring and globalization. But though globalization supposedly causes homogenization and an "ungovernable metropolis" (11) that is decentralized, where there is animosity among ethnic populations, and where there is increasing privatization, the last essay proposes an updated urban theory that allows for a city with a center, multiculturalism, and globalization. An interdisciplinary picture of the three cities emerges as the chapters assess whether the urban theory

of the twentieth century is still relevant today, including Janet Abu-Lughod's examination of race riots in all three cities, Larry Bennett's chapter on the machine politics of Richard J. Daley and the global politics of Richard M. Daley, and Michael Dear's and Nicholas Dahmann's analysis of how LA redefined the city with its "postmodern urbanism" (67), among many others. The work aims to introduce and explore a new set of theoretical perspectives to the twenty-first century.

Poor Economics: A Radical Rethinking of the Way to Fight Global Poverty. By Abhijit V. Banerjee and Esther Duflo. New York: Public Affairs, 2011. Pp. 320. $26.99 (cloth); $15.99 (paper).

Abhijit V. Banerjee and Esther Duflo draw on examples from 40 countries in their study of what traps people in poverty. At the outset, the authors ask, "Do they just live like everyone else, except with less money, or is there something fundamentally different about life under extreme poverty?" (8–9). They come up with an S-shaped curve to show the "poverty trap" (12): when people begin with a low income, they become poorer and poorer. The authors use data from the Abu Latif Jameel Poverty Action Lab to balance economic complexities with practical examples. Their chapter on hunger questions the assumption that poverty and hunger are synonymous, looking at the purchasing choices of the poor and the relationship between nourishment and productivity. Chapter 3 studies why people in poverty choose expensive cures over preventative health, through specific costs of shots, insect nets, and plumbing; chapter 4 thinks about education policy, incentives for education (such as conditional money transfers), and the lack of curriculum; and chapter 5 looks at the history of family planning (and sterilization in India), reasons for high-fertility rates in poorer countries, unbalanced investment in children, abstinence, and so forth. Part II then takes a more detailed approach to the economics of poverty, describing the risk involved in various types of labor, and suggesting ways to spread risk. This part includes an explanation of microlending and interest rates, as well as insight into why people in poverty do not save and how they do.

What Works in Work-First Welfare: Designing and Managing Employment Programs in New York City. By Andrew R. Feldman. Kalamazoo, MI: W. E. Upjohn Institute for Employment Research, 2011. Pp. 183. $40.00 (cloth); $18.00 (paper).

New York City's welfare system is a unique combination of public and private initiatives. Feldman's case study, which focuses on the mid-2000s, draws on data from 14,000 participants in welfare-to-work programs in order to assess how policy changes over the past few decades have or have not been effective. In New York, 26 welfare-to-work and work-first sites are run by 16 nonprofit and 3 for-profit organizations, which each have a performance-based contract with the city. Feldman uses this opportunity to study strategic components across all programs and to compare the success of nonprofits and for-profits. All the programs use four general strategies for moving unemployed people on welfare into work, though different programs may focus on different aspects: "Creating a Spirit of Partnership" (chap. 3), "Getting Participants Job Ready" (chap. 4), "Making Good Job Matches" (chap. 5), and "Promoting Employment Retention" (chap. 6). Assessing the managerial decisions of each program, Feldman generally finds that "broader strategic decisions impact performance more significantly than frontline management practices" (15). For instance, he is critical of programs that emphasize education and training before the job search, because they are generally less successful than those that emphasize immediate employment.

Epidemic City: The Politics of Public Health in New York. By James Colgrove. New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 2011. Pp. 360. $75.00 (cloth); $29.95 (paper).

Epidemic City studies what shaped the unique history of public health in New York. Public health is focused on prevention in the population, rather than treatment in individuals, and began in New York in the 1860s after the cholera epidemic. The subsequent divide between public and private health took on the challenges of working in a huge and hugely diverse city. Colgrove details how the Department of Public Health responded to issues from the beginning of the twentieth century through the present, including financial crises, hospital politics, Medicaid, riots, HIV and AIDS, homelessness, the West Nile virus, poverty, terrorism, tobacco, abortion, trans-fats, and legal investigation. He situates the health issues in complex social and political conditions, examining the media and agenda of the Department of Health in order to parse "the complicated relationship between the public health initiative and the conditions of democracy" (257).

Destroying Sanctuary: The Crisis in Human Service Delivery Systems. By Sandra L. Bloom and Brian Farragher. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010. Pp. 440. $46.50 (cloth).

Destroying Sanctuary wants to change the way human services is thought about. Early on the authors establish a new conceptual framework that aims to move away from conceptualizing these systems as machines and toward thinking of them as living organisms. The authors draw analogies between individual trauma and the maladies of organizations, out of concern that good environments for trauma victims can be compromised by tensions that arise from workplace stress and poisonous administration. They identify acute and chronic issues in health services, for instance, and compare miscommunication within a human body to the pervasive effect of miscommunication in organizations. Drawing on personal experience and a large body of literature, the authors envision a more holistic and attuned system for mental health and other services.

Good Jobs, Bad Jobs: The Rise of Polarized and Precarious Employment Systems in the United States, 1970s to 2000s. By Arne L. Kalleberg. A Volume in the American Sociological Association's Rose Series in Sociology. New York: Russell Sage Foundation. Pp. 312. $37.50 (cloth).

Good Jobs, Bad Jobs describes the history of job quality in America, from the Great Compression postwar period to the recent Great Recession. Good jobs are defined as well-paid jobs with benefits, autonomy, flexibility, and termination, whereas bad jobs are low paid and do not give workers control over the various aspects of their employment. Kalleberg analyzes trends in the numbers of good and bad jobs over time, pointing out the increasing polarization of the job market and tracing the effects of policy (such as the change in the '90s from welfare to workfare). Part III suggests a "new social contract" to enhance job quality, reduce "precarious jobs," and lessen the gap between good jobs and bad jobs (18). It would implement federal policies, create safety nets, provide education and job training, and place trust in the government in regulating the market. Though the book focuses on the United States, it integrates international models of successful labor market reform.

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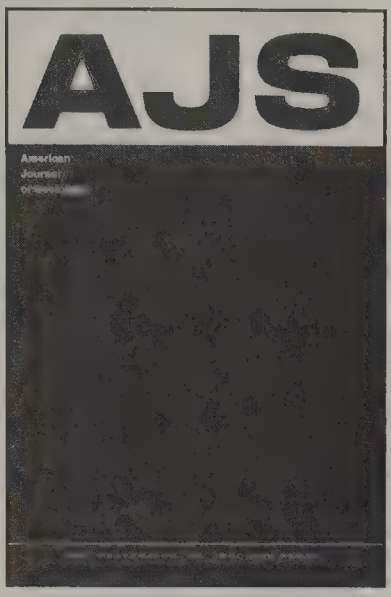
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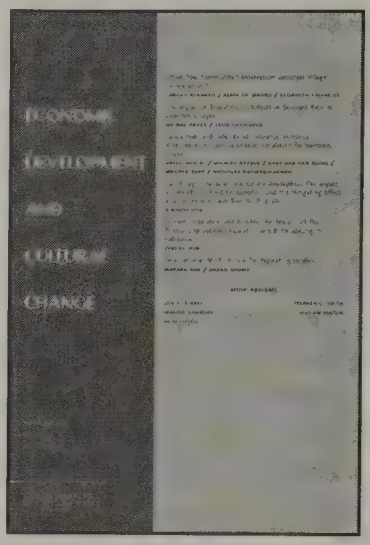
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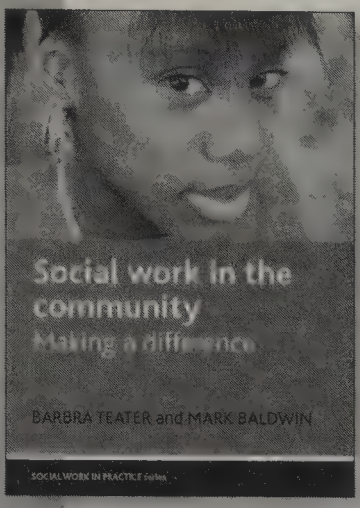
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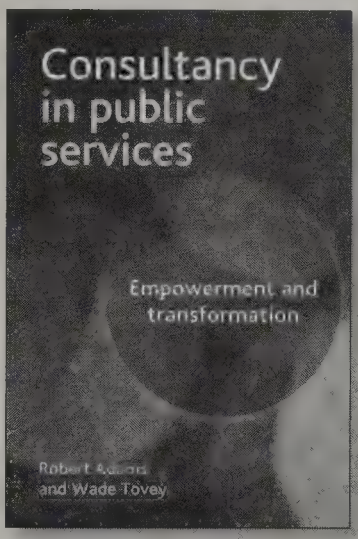
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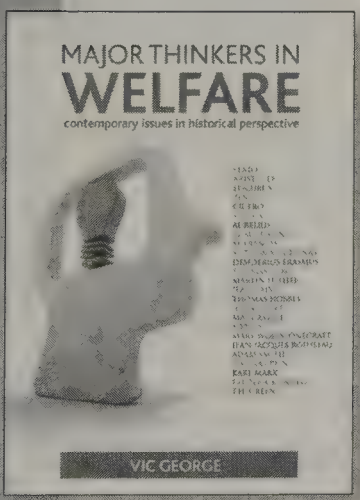
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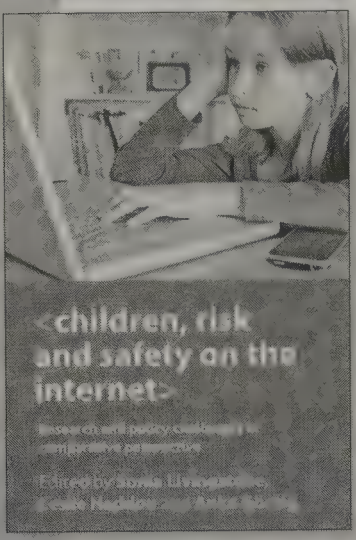
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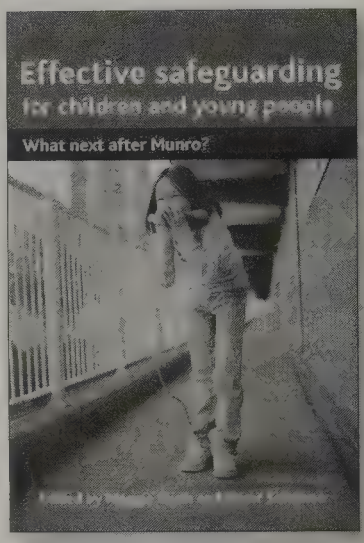
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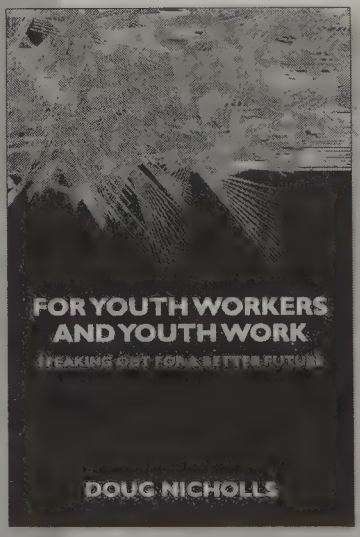
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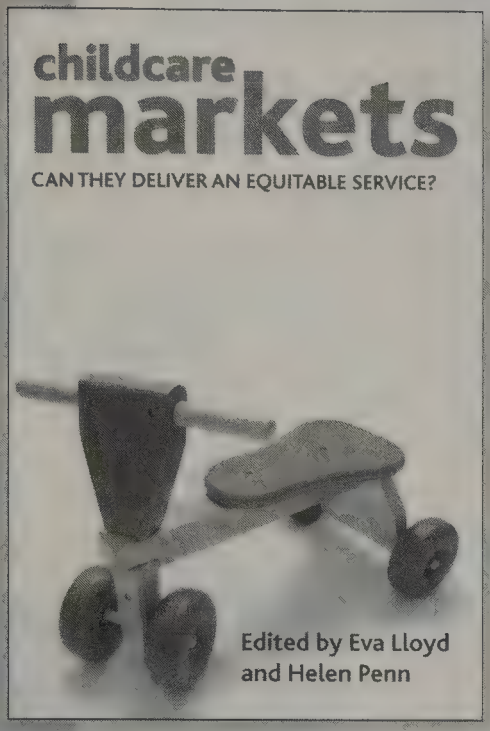
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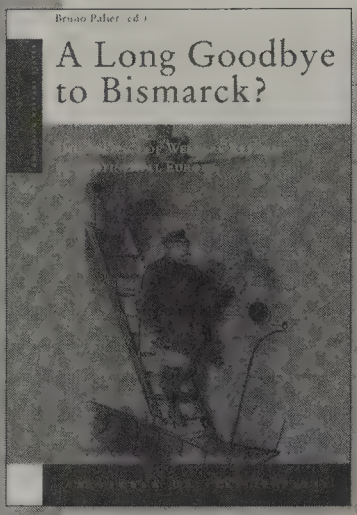
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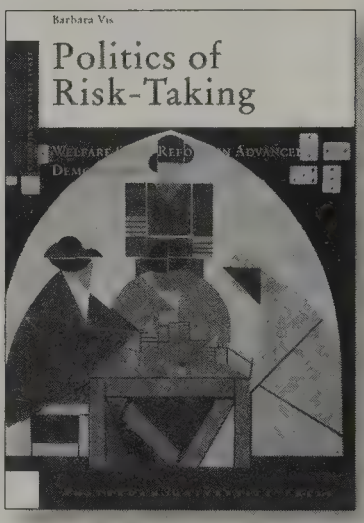
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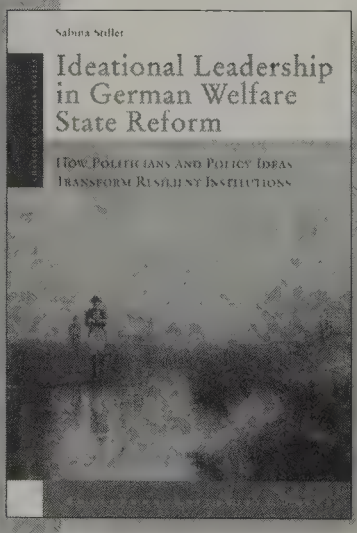
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